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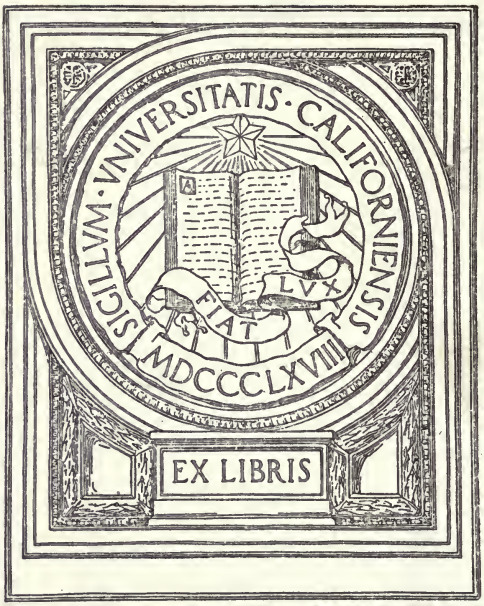

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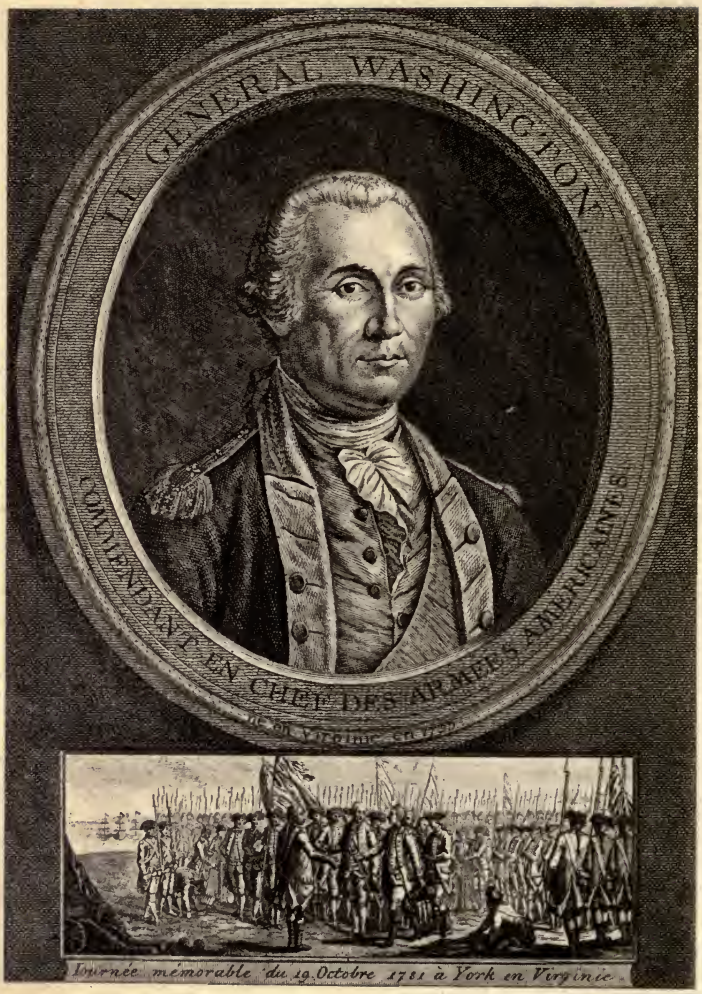
LE GENERAL WASHINGTON
COMMENDANT EN CHEF DES ARMEES AMERICAINES
Journée mémorable du 19 Octobre 1781 à York en Virginie.

Author's Autograph Edition

LIFE OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

BY WASHINGTON IRVING

Volume V.

NEW YORK & LONDON G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS 1896

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Life of
George Washington

AUTHOR'S AUTOGRAPH EDITION

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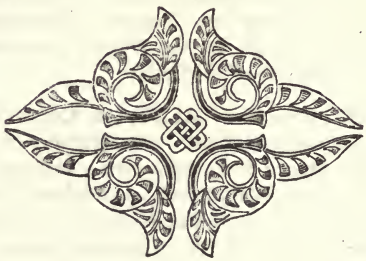

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Life of George Washington

LIFE OF WASHINGTON.

Chapter I.

De Kalb Commissioned Major-General—Pretensions of Conway—Thwarted by Washington—Conway Cabal—Gates Remiss in Correspondence—Dilatory in Forwarding Troops—Mission of Hamilton to Gates—Wilkinson Bearer of Despatches to Congress—A Tardy Traveller—His Reward—Conway Correspondence Detected—Washington's Apology for his Army.

WE have heretofore had occasion to advert to the annoyances and perplexities occasioned to Washington by the claims and pretensions of foreign officers who had entered into the service. Among the officers who came out with Lafayette, was the Baron De Kalb, a German by birth, but who had long been employed in the French service, and though a silver-haired

veteran, sixty years of age, was yet fresh and active and vigorous; which some attributed to his being a rigid water drinker. In the month of September, Congress had given him the commission of major-general, to date with that of Lafayette.

This instantly produced a remonstrance from Brigadier-General Conway, the Gallic Hibernian, of whom we have occasionally made mention, who considered himself slighted and forgot, in their giving a superior rank to his own to a person who had not rendered the cause the least service, and who had been his inferior in France. He claimed, therefore, for himself, the rank of major-general, and was supported in his pretensions by persons both in and out of Congress; especially by Mifflin, the quartermaster-general.

Washington had already been disgusted by the overweening presumption of Conway, and was surprised to hear that his application was likely to be successful. He wrote on the 17th of October, to Richard Henry Lee, then in Congress, warning him that such an appointment would be as unfortunate a measure as ever was adopted—one that would give a fatal blow to the existence of the army. "Upon so interesting a subject," observes he, "I must speak plainly. The duty I owe my coun-

try, the ardent desire I have to promote its true interests, and justice to individuals, require this of me. General Conway's merit as an officer, and his importance in this army, exist more in his own imagination than in reality. For it is a maxim with him to leave no service of his own untold, nor to want anything which is to be obtained by importunity. . . . I would ask why the youngest brigadier in the service should be put over the heads of the oldest, and thereby take rank and command of gentlemen who but yesterday were his seniors; gentlemen who, as I will be bound to say in behalf of some of them at least, are of sound judgment and unquestionable bravery. . . . This truth I am well assured of, that they will not serve under him. I leave you to guess, therefore, at the situation this army would be in at so important a crisis, if this event should take place."

This opposition to his presumptuous aspirations, at once threw Conway into a faction forming under the auspices of General Mifflin. This gentleman had recently tendered his resignation of the commission of major-general and quartermaster-general on the plea of ill-health, but was busily engaged in intrigues against the commander-in-chief, towards whom he had long cherished a secret hostility. Con-

way now joined with him heart and hand, and soon became so active and prominent a member of the faction that it acquired the name of *Conway's Cabal.* The object was to depreciate the military character of Washington, in comparison with that of Gates, to whom was attributed the whole success of the Northern campaign. Gates was perfectly ready for such an elevation. He was intoxicated by his good fortune, and seemed to forget that he had reaped where he had not sown, and that the defeat of Burgoyne had been insured by plans concerted and put in operation before his arrival in the Northern Department.

In fact, in the excitement of his vanity, Gates appears to have forgotten that there was a commander-in-chief, to whom he was accountable. He neglected to send him any despatch on the subject of the surrender of Burgoyne, contenting himself with sending one to Congress, then sitting at Yorktown. Washington was left to hear of the important event by casual rumor, and was for several days in anxious uncertainty, until he received a copy of the capitulation in a letter from General Putnam.

Gates was equally neglectful to inform him of the disposition he intended to make of the army under his command. He delayed even

to forward Morgan's rifle corps, though their services were no longer needed in his camp, and were so much required in the south. It was determined, therefore, in a council of war, that one of Washington's staff should be sent to Gates to represent the critical state of affairs, and that a large reinforcement from the Northern army would, in all probability, reduce General Howe to the same situation with Burgoyne, should he remain in Philadelphia, without being able to remove the obstructions in the Delaware, and open a free communication with his shipping.

Colonel Alexander Hamilton, his youthful but intelligent aide-de-camp, was charged with this mission. He bore a letter from Washington to Gates, dated October 30th, of which the following is an extract:

"By this opportunity, I do myself the pleasure to congratulate you on the signal success of the army under your command, in compelling General Burgoyne and his whole force to surrender themselves prisoners of war; an event that does the highest honor to the American arms, and which, I hope, will be attended with the most extensive and happy consequences. At the same time, I cannot but regret that a matter of such magnitude, and so interesting to our general operations, should

have reached me by report only; or through the channel of letters not bearing that authenticity which the importance of it required, and which it would have received by a line under your signature stating the simple fact."

Such was the calm and dignified notice of an instance of official disrespect, almost amounting to insubordination. It is doubtful whether Gates, in his state of mental effervescence, felt the noble severity of the rebuke.

The officer whom Gates had employed as bearer of his despatch to Congress, was Wilkinson, his adjutant-general and devoted sycophant: a man at once pompous and servile. He was so long on the road that the articles of the treaty, according to his own account, reached the grand army before he did the Congress. Even after his arrival at Yorktown he required three days to arrange his papers, preparing to deliver them in style. At length, eighteen days after the surrender of Burgoyne had taken place, he formally laid the documents concerning it before Congress, preluding them with a message in the name of Gates, but prepared the day before by himself, and following them up by comments, explanatory and eulogistic, of his own.

He evidently expected to produce a great effect by this rhetorical display, and to be signally re-

warded for his good tidings, but Congress were as slow in expressing their sense of his services, as he had been in rendering them. He swelled and chafed under this neglect, but affected to despise it. In a letter to his patron, Gates, he observes: "I have not been honored with any mark of distinction from Congress. Indeed, should I receive no testimony of their approbation of my conduct, I shall not be mortified. My hearty contempt of the world will shield me from such pitiful sensations." *

A proposal was at length made in Congress that a sword should be voted to him as the bearer of such auspicious tidings; upon which Dr. Witherspoon, a shrewd Scot, exclaimed, "I think ye'll better gie the lad *a pair of spurs.*" †

A few days put an end to Wilkinson's suspense, and probably reconciled him to the world; he was breveted a brigadier-general. A fortuitous circumstance, which we shall explain hereafter, apprised Washington about this time that a correspondence, derogatory to his military character and conduct, was going on between General Conway and General Gates. It was a parallel case with Lee's correspondence of the preceding year; and Washington con-

* Gates's *Papers*, N. Y. Hist. Lib.

† *Life of Lord Stirling*, by W. A. Duer, p. 182.

ducted himself in it with the same dignified forbearance, contenting himself with letting Conway know, by the following brief note, dated November 9th, that his correspondence was detected.

"SIR,—A letter which I received last night contained the following paragraph: 'In a letter from General Conway to General Gates, he says, "*Heaven has determined to save your country, or a weak general and bad counsellors would have ruined it.*"'

"I am, sir, your humble servant,

"GEORGE WASHINGTON."

The brevity of this note rendered it the more astounding. It was a hand-grenade thrown into the midst of the cabal. The effect upon other members we shall show hereafter: it seems, at first, to have prostrated Conway. An epistle of his friend Mifflin to Gates intimates, that Conway endeavored to palliate to Washington the censorious expressions in his letter, by pleading the careless freedom of language indulged in familiar letter writing; no other record of such explanation remains, and that probably was not received as satisfactory. Certain it is, he immediately sent in his resignation. To some he alleged, as an excuse for resigning, the disparaging way in which he

had been spoken of by some members of Congress ; to others he observed, that the campaign was at an end, and there was a prospect of a French war. The real reason he kept to himself, and Washington suffered it to remain a secret. His resignation, however, was not accepted by Congress ; on the contrary, he was supported by the cabal, and was advanced to further honors, which we shall specify hereafter.

In the meantime, the cabal went on to make invidious comparisons between the achievements of the two armies, deeply derogatory to that under Washington. Publicly he took no notice of them ; but they drew from him the following apology for his army, in a noble and characteristic letter to his friend, the celebrated Patrick Henry, then governor of Virginia. "The design of this," writes he, "is only to inform you, and with great truth I can do it, strange as it may seem, that the army which I have had under my immediate command, has not, at any one time, since General Howe's landing at the Head of Elk, been equal in point of numbers to his. In ascertaining this, I do not confine myself to continental troops, but comprehend militia. The disaffected and lukewarm in this State, in whom unhappily it too much abounds, taking advantage of the distraction in the government,

prevented those vigorous exertions, which an invaded State ought to have yielded. . . . I was left to fight two battles, in order, if possible, to save Philadelphia, with less numbers than composed the army of my antagonist, whilst the world has given us at least double. This impression, though mortifying in some points of view, I have been obliged to encourage; because, next to being strong, it is best to be thought so by the enemy; and to this cause, principally, I think is to be attributed the slow movements of General Howe.

"How different the case in the Northern Department! There the States of New York and New England, resolving to crush Burgoyne, continued pouring in their troops, till the surrender of that army; at which time not less than fourteen thousand militia, as I have been informed, were actually in General Gates's camp, and those composed, for the most part, of the best yeomanry in the country, well armed, and in many instances supplied with provisions of their own carrying. Had the same spirit pervaded the people of this and the neighboring States, we might before this time have had General Howe nearly in the situation of General Burgoyne.

. . . . . .

"My own difficulties, in the course of the

campaign, have been not a little increased by the extra aid of continental troops, which the gloomy prospect of our affairs in the north immediately after the reduction of Ticonderoga, induced me to spare from this army. But it is to be hoped that all will yet end well. IF THE CAUSE IS ADVANCED, INDIFFERENT IS IT TO ME WHERE OR IN WHAT QUARTER IT HAPPENS."

We have put the last sentence in capitals, for it speaks the whole soul of Washington. Glory with him is a secondary consideration. Let those who win, wear the laurel—sufficient for him is the advancement of the cause.

NOTE.

We subjoin an earnest appeal of Washington to Thomas Wharton, president of Pennsylvania, on the 17th of October, urging him to keep up the quota of troops demanded of the State by Congress, and to furnish additional aid. "I assure you, sir," writes he, "it is a matter of astonishment to every part of the continent to hear that Pennsylvania, the most opulent and populous of all the States, has but twelve hundred militia in the field, at a time when the enemy are endeavoring to make themselves completely masters of, and fix their quarters in her capital." And Major-General Armstrong, commanding the Pennsylvania militia, writes at the same time to the Council of his State: "Be not deceived with wrong notions

of General Washington's numbers; be assured he wants your aid. Let the brave step forth, their example will animate the many. You all speak well of our commander-in-chief at a distance; don't you want to see him, and pay him one generous, one martial visit, when kindly invited to his camp near the end of a long campaign? There you will see for yourselves the unremitting zeal and toils of all the day and half the night, multiplied into years, without seeing house or home of his own, without murmur or complaint; but believes and calls this arduous task the service of his country and of his God."

Chapter II.

Further Hostilities on the Delaware—Fort Mifflin Attacked—Bravely Defended—Reduced—Mission of Hamilton to Gates—Visits the Camp of Governor Clinton and Putnam on the Hudson—Putnam on his Hobby-Horse—Difficulties in Procuring Reinforcements—Intrigues of the Cabal—Letters of Lovell and Mifflin to Gates—The Works at Red Bank Destroyed—The Enemy in Possession of the Delaware.

THE non-arrival of reinforcements from the Northern army continued to embarrass Washington's operations. The enemy were making preparations for further attempts upon forts Mercer and Mifflin. General Howe was constructing redoubts and batteries on Province Island, on the west side of the Delaware, within five hundred yards of Fort Mifflin, and mounting them with heavy cannon. Washington consulted with his general officers what was to be done. Had the army received the expected reinforcements from

the North, it might have detached sufficient force to the west side of the Schuylkill to dislodge the enemy from Province Island; but at present it would require almost the whole of the army for the purpose. This would leave the public stores at Easton, Bethlehem, and Allentown, uncovered, as well as several of the hospitals. It would also leave the post at Red Bank unsupported, through which Fort Mifflin was reinforced and supplied. It was determined, therefore, to await the arrival of the expected reinforcements from the North, before making any alteration in the disposition of the army. In the meantime, the garrisons of forts Mercer and Mifflin were increased, and General Varnum was stationed at Red Bank with his brigade, to be at hand to render reinforcements to either of them as occasion might require.

On the 10th of November, General Howe commenced a heavy fire upon Fort Mifflin from his batteries, which mounted eighteen, twenty-four, and thirty-two pounders. Colonel Smith doubted the competency of his feeble garrison to defend the works against a force so terribly effective, and wrote to Washington accordingly. The latter in reply represented the great importance of the works, and trusted they would be maintained to the last extrem-

ity. General Varnum was instructed to send over fresh troops occasionally to relieve those in the garrison, and to prevail upon as many as possible of the militia to go over. The latter could be employed at night upon the works to repair the damage sustained in the day, and might, if they desired it, return to Red Bank in the morning.

Washington's orders and instructions were faithfully obeyed. Major Fleury, a brave French officer, already mentioned, acquitted himself with intelligence and spirit as engineer; but an incessant cannonade and bombardment for several days, defied all repairs. The block-houses were demolished, the palisades beaten down, the guns dismounted, the barracks reduced to ruins. Captain Treat, a young officer of great merit, who commanded the artillery, was killed, as were several non-commissioned officers and privates; and a number were wounded.

The survivors, who were not wounded, were exhausted by want of sleep, hard duty, and constant exposure to the rain. Colonel Smith himself was disabled by severe contusions, and obliged to retire to Red Bank.

The fort was in ruins; there was danger of its being carried by storm, but the gallant Fleury thought it might yet be defended with

the aid of fresh troops. Such were furnished from Varnum's brigade: Lieutenant-Colonel Russell, of the Connecticut line, replaced Colonel Smith. He, in his turn, was obliged to relinquish the command through fatigue and ill health, and was succeeded by Major Thayer of Rhode Island, aided by Captain (afterwards Commodore) Talbot, who had distinguished himself in the preceding year by an attack on a ship of war in the Hudson. The present was an occasion that required men of desperate valor.

On the fourth day the enemy brought a large Indiaman, cut down to a floating battery, to bear upon the works; but though it opened a terrible fire, it was silenced before night. The next day several ships of war got within gunshot. Two prepared to attack it in front; others brought their guns to bear on Fort Mercer; while two made their way into the narrow channel between Mud Island and the Pennsylvania shore, to operate with the British batteries erected there.

At a concerted signal a cannonade was opened from all quarters. The heroic little garrison stood the fire without flinching; the danger, however, was growing imminent. The batteries on Province Island enfiladed the works. The ships in the inner channel approached so near as to throw hand-grenades

into the fort, while marines stationed in the round-tops stood ready to pick off any of the garrison that came in sight.

The scene now became awful; incessant firing from ships, forts, gondolas, and floating batteries, with clouds of sulphurous smoke, and the deafening thunder of cannon. Before night there was hardly a fortification to defend; palisades were shivered, guns dismounted, the whole parapet levelled. There was terrible slaughter; most of the company of artillery were destroyed. Fleury himself was wounded. Captain Talbot received a wound in the wrist, but continued bravely fighting until disabled by another wound in the hip.*

To hold out longer was impossible. Major Thayer made preparations to evacuate the fort in the night. Everything was removed in the evening, that could be conveyed away without too much exposure to the murderous fire from the round-tops. The wounded were taken over to Red Bank, accompanied by part of the garrison. Thayer remained with forty men until eleven o'clock, when they set fire to what was combustible of the fort they had so nobly defended, and crossed to Red Bank by the light of its flames.

* *Life of Talbot*, by Henry T. Tuckerman, p. 31.

The loss of this fort was deeply regretted by Washington, though he gave high praise to the officers and men of the garrison. Colonel Smith was voted a sword by Congress, and Fleury received the commission of lieutenant-colonel.

Washington still hoped to keep possession of Red Bank, and thereby prevent the enemy from weighing the chevaux-de-frise before the frost obliged their ships to quit the river. "I am anxiously waiting the arrival of the troops from the northward," writes he, "who ought, from the time they have had my orders, to have been here before this. Colonel Hamilton, one of my aides, is up the North River, doing all he can to push them forward, but he writes me word, that he finds many unaccountable delays thrown in his way. The want of these troops has embarrassed all my measures exceedingly."

The delays in question will best be explained by a few particulars concerning the mission of Colonel Hamilton. On his way to the headquarters of Gates, at Albany, he found Governor Clinton and General Putnam encamped on the opposite sides of the Hudson, just above the Highlands; the governor at New Windsor, Putnam at Fishkill. About a mile from New Windsor, Hamilton met Morgan and his rifle-

men, early in the morning of the 2d of November, on the march for Washington's camp, having been thus tardily detached by Gates. Hamilton urged him to hasten on with all possible despatch, which he promised to do. The colonel had expected to find matters in such a train, that he would have little to do but hurry on ample reinforcements already on the march; whereas, he found that a large part of the Northern army was to remain in and about Albany, about four thousand men to be spared to the commander-in-chief; the rest were to be stationed on the east side of the Hudson with Putnam, who had held a council of war how to dispose of them. The old general, in fact, had for some time past been haunted by a project of an attack upon New York, in which he had twice been thwarted, and for which the time seemed propitious, now that most of the British troops were reported to have gone from New York to reinforce General Howe. Hamilton rather disconcerted his project by directing him, in Washington's name, to hurry forward two continental brigades to the latter, together with Warner's militia brigade; also to order to Red Bank a body of Jersey militia about to cross to Peekskill.

Having given these directions, Hamilton hastened on to Albany. He found still less

disposition on the part of Gates to furnish the troops required. There was no certainty, he said, that Sir Henry Clinton had gone to join General Howe. There was a possibility of his returning up the river, which would expose the arsenal at Albany to destruction, should that city be left bare of troops. The New England States, too, would be left open to the ravages and depredations of the enemy ; beside, it would put it out of his power to attempt anything against Ticonderoga, an undertaking of great importance, in which he might engage in the winter. In a word, Gates had schemes of his own, to which those of the commander-in-chief must give way.

Hamilton felt, he says, how embarrassing a task it was for one so young as himself to oppose the opinions and plans of a veteran, whose successes had elevated him to the highest importance ; though he considered his reasonings unsubstantial, and merely calculated to "catch the Eastern people." It was with the greatest difficulty he prevailed on Gates to detach the brigades of Poor and Patterson to the aid of the commander-in-chief ; and, finding reinforcements fall thus short from this quarter, he wrote to Putnam to forward an additional thousand of continental troops from his camp. "I doubt," writes he subsequently to Washington,

"whether you would have had a man from the Northern army, if the whole could have been kept at Albany with any decency."

Having concluded his mission to General Gates, Hamilton returned to the camp of Governor Clinton. The worthy governor seemed the general officer best disposed in this quarter to promote the public weal, independent of personal considerations. He had recently expressed his opinion to General Gates, that the army under Washington ought at present to be the chief object of attention, "for on its success everything worth regarding depended."

The only need of troops in this quarter at present, was to protect the country from little plundering parties, and to carry on the works necessary for the defense of the river. The latter was the governor's main thought. He was eager to reconstruct the fortresses out of which he had been so forcibly ejected; or rather to construct new ones in a better place, about West Point, where obstructions were again to be extended across the river.*

* Governor Clinton and myself have been down to view the forts, and are both of opinion that a boom thrown across at Fort Constitution, and a battery on each side of the river, would answer a much better purpose than at Fort Montgomery, as the garrison would be reinforced by militia with more expedition,

Putnam, on the contrary, wished to keep as much force as possible under his control. The old general was once more astride of what Hamilton termed his "hobby-horse," an expedition against New York. He had neglected to forward the troops which had been ordered to the South; not the least attention had been paid by him to Hamilton's order from Albany, in Washington's name, for the detachment of an additional thousand of troops. Some, which had come down from Albany, had been marched by him to Tarrytown: he himself had reconnoitered the country almost down to King's Bridge, and was now advanced to the neighborhood of White Plains. "Everything," writes Hamilton, "is sacrificed to the whim of taking New York." The young colonel was perplexed how to proceed with the brave-hearted, but somewhat wrong-headed old general; who was in as bellicose a mood, now that he was mounted on his hobby, as when at the siege of Boston he mounted the prize mortar "Congress," and prayed for gunpowder.

Hamilton, in his perplexity, consulted Governor Clinton. The latter agreed with him that an attempt against New York would be a mere

and the ground much more definable (defendable?).—Putnam to Washington, 7th Nov., 1777.—Sparks's *Cor. of the Rev.*, ii., 30.

"suicidal parade," wasting time and men. The city at present was no object, even if it could be taken, and to take it would require men that could ill be spared from more substantial purposes. The governor, however, understood the character and humors of his old coadjutor, and in his downright way, advised Hamilton to send an order in the most emphatical terms to General Putnam, to despatch all the continental troops under him to Washington's assistance, and to detain the militia instead of them.

A little of the governor's own hobby, by the way, showed itself in his councils. "He thinks," writes Hamilton, "that there is no need of more continental troops here than a few, to give a spur to the militia in working upon the fortifications."

The "emphatical" letter of Hamilton had the effect the governor intended. It unhorsed the belligerent veteran when in full career. The project against New York was again given up and the reinforcements reluctantly ordered to the South. "I am sorry to say," writes Hamilton, "the disposition for marching in the officers, and men in general, of these troops, does not keep pace with my wishes, or the exigency of the occasion. They have unfortunately imbibed an idea that they have done

their part of the business of the campaign, and are now entitled to repose. This, and the want of pay, make them adverse to a long march at this advanced season."

Governor Clinton borrowed six thousand dollars for Hamilton, to enable him to put some of the troops in motion; "indeed," writes the colonel, "he has been the only man who has done anything to remove these difficulties." Hamilton advised that the command of the post should be given to the governor, if he would accept of it, and Putnam should be recalled; "whose blunders and caprices," said he, "are endless."

Washington, however, knew too well the innate worth and sterling patriotism of the old general, to adopt a measure that might deeply mortify him. The enterprise, too, on which the veteran had been bent, was one which he himself had approved of when suggested under other circumstances. He contented himself, therefore, with giving him a reprimand in the course of a letter, for his present dilatoriness in obeying the orders of his commander-in-chief. "I cannot but say," writes he, "there has been more delay in the march of the troops than I think necessary; and I could wish, that in future my orders may be immediately complied with, without arguing upon the propriety of

them. If any accident ensues from obeying them, the fault will be upon me, not upon you."

Washington found it more necessary than usual, at this moment, to assert his superior command, from the attempts which were being made to weaken his stand in the public estimation. Still he was not aware of the extent of the intrigues that were in progress around him, in which we believe honest Putnam had no share. There was evidently a similar game going on with that which had displaced the worthy Schuyler. The surrender of Burgoyne, though mainly the result of Washington's far-seeing plans, had suddenly trumped up Gates into a quasi rival. A letter written to Gates at the time, and still existing among his papers, lays open the spirit of the cabal. It is without signature, but in the handwriting of James Lovell, member of Congress from Massachusetts; the same who had supported Gates in opposition to Schuyler. The following are extracts: "You have saved our Northern Hemisphere; and in spite of consummate and repeated blundering, you have changed the condition of the Southern campaign, on the part of the enemy, from offensive to defensive. . . . The campaign here must soon close; if our troops are obliged to retire to Lancaster,

Reading, Bethlehem, etc., for winter-quarters, and the country below is laid open to the enemy's flying parties, great and very general will be the murmur—so great, so general, that nothing inferior to a commander-in-chief will be able to resist the mighty torrent of public clamor and public vengeance.

"We have had a noble army melted down by ill-judged marches—marches that disgrace the authors and directors, and which have occasioned the severest and most just sarcasm and contempt of our enemies.

"How much are you to be envied, my dear general! How different your conduct and your fortune!

"A letter from Colonel Mifflin, received at the writing of the last paragraph, gives me the disagreeable intelligence of the loss of our fort on the Delaware. You must know the consequences—loss of the river, boats, galleys, ships of war, etc.; good winter-quarters to the enemy, and a general retreat, or ill-judged, blind attempt on our part to save a gone character.

"Conway, Spotswood, Connor, Ross, and Mifflin resigned, and many other brave and good officers are preparing their letters to Congress on the same subject. In short, this army will be totally lost, unless you come down and

collect the virtuous band who wish to fight under your banner and with their aid save the Southern Hemisphere. Prepare yourself for a jaunt to this place—Congress must send for you.'' *

Under such baleful supervision, of which, as we have observed, he was partly conscious, but not to its full extent, Washington was obliged to carry on a losing game, in which the very elements seemed to conspire against him.

In the meantime, Sir William Howe was following up the reduction of Fort Mifflin by an expedition against Fort Mercer, which still impeded the navigation of the Delaware. On the 17th of November, Lord Cornwallis was detached with two thousand men to cross from Chester into the Jerseys, where he would be joined by a force advancing from New York.

Apprised of this movement, Washington detached General Huntington, with a brigade, to join Varnum at Red Bank. General Greene was also ordered to repair thither with his division, and an express was sent off to General Glover, who was on his way through the Jerseys with his brigade, directing him to file off to the left towards the same point. These troops, with such militia as could be collected, Washington hoped would be sufficient to save

* Gates's *Papers*, N. Y. Hist. Soc. Lib.

the fort. Before they could form a junction, however, and reach their destination, Cornwallis appeared before it. A defense against such superior force was hopeless. The works were abandoned; they were taken possession of by the enemy, who proceeded to destroy them. After the destruction had been accomplished, the reinforcements from the North, so long and so anxiously expected, and so shamefully delayed, made their appearance. "Had they arrived but ten days sooner," writes Washington to his brother, "it would, I think, have put it in my power to save Fort Mifflin, which defended the chevaux-de-frise, and consequently have rendered Philadelphia a very ineligible situation for the enemy this winter."

The troops arrived in ragged plight, owing to the derangement of the commissariat. A part of Morgan's rifle corps was absolutely unable to take the field for want of shoes, and such was the prevalent want in this particular, that ten dollars reward was offered in general orders for a model of the best substitute for shoes that could be made out of raw hides.

The evil which Washington had so anxiously striven to prevent had now been effected. The American vessels stationed in the river had lost all protection. Some of the galleys escaped past the batteries of Philadelphia in a fog, and

took refuge in the upper part of the Delaware; the rest were set on fire by their crews and abandoned.

The enemy were now in possession of the river, but it was too late in the season to clear away the obstructions, and open a passage for the large ships. All that could be effected at present, was to open a sufficient channel for transports and vessels of easy burden, to bring provisions and supplies for the army.

Washington advised the navy board, now that the enemy had command of the river, to have all the American frigates scuttled and sunk immediately. The board objected to sinking them, but said that they should be ballasted and plugged, ready to be sunk in case of an attack. Washington warned them that an attack would be sudden, so as to get possession of them before they could be sunk or destroyed; his advice and warning were unheeded; the consequences will hereafter be shown.

Chapter III.

Question of an Attack on Philadelphia—General Reed at Headquarters—Enemy's Works Reconnoitered—Opinions in a Council of War—Exploit of Lafayette—Receives Command of a Division—Modification of the Board of War—Gates to Preside—Letter of Lovell—Sally Forth of General Howe—Evolutions and Skirmishes—Conway Inspector-General—Consultation about Winter Quarters—Dreary March to Valley Forge—Hutting—Washington's Vindicatory Letters—Retrospect of the Year.

ON the evening of the 24th of November Washington reconnoitered, carefully and thoughtfully, the lines and defenses about Philadelphia, from the opposite side of the Schuylkill. His army was now considerably reinforced; the garrison was weakened by the absence of a large body of troops under Lord Cornwallis in the Jerseys. Some of the general officers thought this an advantageous moment for an attack upon the

city. Such was the opinion of Lord Stirling, and especially General Wayne, Mad Anthony, as he was familiarly called, always eager for some daring enterprise. The recent victory at Saratoga had dazzled the public mind, and produced a general impatience for something equally striking and effective in that quarter. Reed, Washington's former secretary, now a brigadier-general, shared largely in this feeling. He had written a letter to Gates, congratulating him on having "reduced his proud and insolent enemy to the necessity of laying his arms at his feet"; assuring him that it would "enroll his name with the happy few who shine in history, not as conquerors, but as distinguished generals. I have for some time," adds he, "volunteered with this army, which, notwithstanding the labors and efforts of its amiable chief, has yet gathered no laurels." *

Reed was actually at headquarters as a volunteer, again enjoying much of Washington's confidence, and anxious that he should do something to meet the public wishes. Washington was aware of this prevalent feeling, and that it was much wrought on by the intrigues of designing men, and by the sarcasms of the press. He was now reconnoitering the enemy's works to judge of the policy of the proposed

* Reed to Gates. Gates's *Papers*.

attack. "A vigorous exertion is under consideration," writes Reed; "God grant it may be successful!"*

Everything in the neighborhood of the enemy's lines bore traces of the desolating hand of war. Several houses, owned probably by noted patriots, had been demolished; others burnt. Villas stood roofless; their doors and windows, and all the woodwork, had been carried off to make huts for the artillery. Nothing but bare walls remained. Gardens had been trampled down and destroyed; not a fence nor fruit-tree was to be seen. The gathering gloom of a November evening heightened the sadness of this desolation.

With an anxious eye Washington scrutinized the enemy's works. They appeared to be exceedingly strong. A chain of redoubts extended along the most commanding ground from the Schuylkill to the Delaware. They were framed, planked, and of great thickness, and were surrounded by a deep ditch, inclosed and fraised. The intervals were filled with an abatis, in constructing which all the apple-trees of the neighborhood, besides forest trees, had been sacrificed.†

The idea of Lord Stirling and those in favor

* Reed to President Wharton.

† *Life and Cor. of Reed*, vol. i., p. 341.

of an attack, was, that it should be at different points at daylight; the main body to attack the lines to the north of the city, while Greene, embarking his men in boats at Dunk's Ferry, and passing down the Delaware, and Potter, with a body of Continentals and militia, moving down the west side of the Schuylkill, should attack the eastern and western fronts.

Washington saw that there was an opportunity for a brilliant blow, that might satisfy the impatience of the public, and silence the sarcasms of the press; but he saw that it must be struck at the expense of a fearful loss of life.

Returning to camp, he held a council of war of his principal officers, in which the matter was debated at great length and with some warmth; but without coming to a decision. At breaking up, Washington requested that each member of the council would give his opinion the next morning in writing, and he sent off a messenger in the night for the written opinion of General Greene.

Only four members of the council, Stirling, Wayne, Scott, and Woodford, were in favor of an attack; of which Lord Stirling drew up the plan. Eleven (including Greene) were against it, objecting, among other things, that the enemy's lines were too strong and too well supported, and their force too numerous, well

disciplined, and experienced, to be assailed without great loss and the hazard of a failure.

Had Washington been actuated by mere personal ambition and a passion for military fame, or had he yielded to the goadings of faction and the press, he might have disregarded the loss and hazarded the failure; but his patriotism was superior to his ambition; he shrank from a glory that must be achieved at such a cost, and the idea of an attack was abandoned.

General Reed, in a letter to Thomas Wharton, president of Pennsylvania, endeavors to prevent the cavilling of that functionary and his co-legislators, who, though they had rendered very slender assistance in the campaign, were extremely urgent for some striking achievement. "From my own feelings," writes he, "I can easily judge of yours and the gentlemen round, at the seeming inactivity of this army for so long a time. I know it is peculiarly irksome to the general, whose own judgment led to more vigorous measures; but there has been so great a majority of his officers opposed to every enterprising plan, as fully justifies his conduct." At the same time Reed confesses that he himself concurs with the great majority, who deemed an attack upon Philadelphia too hazardous.

A letter from General Greene received about this time, gave Washington most gratifying intelligence about his youthful friend, the Marquis de Lafayette. Though not quite recovered from the wound received at the battle of Brandywine, he had accompanied General Greene as a volunteer in his expedition into the Jerseys, and had been indulged by him with an opportunity of gratifying his belligerent humor, in a brush with Cornwallis's outposts. "The marquis," writes Greene, "with about four hundred militia and the rifle corps, attacked the enemy's picket last evening, killed about twenty, wounded many more, and took about twenty prisoners. The marquis is charmed with the spirited behavior of the militia and rifle corps; they drove the enemy about half a mile, and kept the ground until dark. The enemy's picket consisted of about three hundred, and were reinforced during the skirmish. The marquis is determined to be in the way of danger." *

Lafayette himself, at the request of Greene, wrote an animated yet modest account of the affair to Washington. "I wish," observes he, "that this little success of ours may please you; though a very trifling one, I find it very

* Washington's *Writings*. Sparks, vol. v., p. 171.

interesting on account of the behavior of our soldiers." *

Washington had repeatedly written to Congress in favor of giving the marquis a command equal to his nominal rank, in consideration of his illustrious and important connections, the attachment he manifested to the cause, and the discretion and good sense he had displayed on various occasions. "I am convinced," said he, "he possesses a large share of that military ardor which generally characterizes the nobility of his country."

Washington availed himself of the present occasion to support his former recommendations, by transmitting to Congress an account of Lafayette's youthful exploit. He received, in return, an intimation from that body, that it was their pleasure he should appoint the marquis to the command of a division in the Continental Army. The division of General Stephen at this time was vacant; that veteran officer, who had formerly won honor for himself in the French war, having been dismissed for misconduct at the battle of Germantown, the result of intemperate habits, into which he unfortunately had fallen. Lafayette was forthwith appointed to the command of that division.

* *Memoirs of Lafayette*, vol. i., p. 122.

At this juncture (November 27th) a modification took place in the Board of War, indicative of the influence which was operating in Congress. It was increased from three to five members: General Mifflin, Joseph Trumbull, Richard Peters, Colonel Pickering, and last, though certainly not least, General Gates. Mifflin's resignation of the commission of quartermaster-general had recently been accepted; but that of major-general was continued to him, though without pay. General Gates was appointed president of the board, and the President of Congress was instructed to express to him, in communicating the intelligence, the high sense which that body entertained of his abilities, and peculiar fitness to discharge the duties of that important office, upon the right execution of which the success of the American cause so eminently depended; and to inform him it was their intention to continue his rank as major-general, and that he might officiate at the board or in the field, as occasion might require; furthermore, that he should repair to Congress with all convenient despatch, to enter upon the duties of his appointment. It was evidently the idea of the cabal that Gates was henceforth to be the master-spirit of the war. His friend Lovell, chairman of the committee of foreign re-

lations, writes to him on the same day to urge him on. "We want you at different places; but we want you most near Germantown. Good God! What a situation we are in; how different from what might have been justly expected! You will be astonished when you know accurately what numbers have at one time and another been collected near Philadelphia, to wear out stockings, shoes, and breeches. Depend upon it, for every ten soldiers placed under the command of our Fabius, five recruits will be wanted annually during the war. The brave fellows at Fort Mifflin and Red Bank have despaired of succor, and been obliged to quit. The naval departments have fallen into circumstances of seeming disgrace. Come to the Board of War, if only for a short season. . . . If it was not for the defeat of Burgoyne, and the strong appearance of a European war, our affairs are Fabiused into a very disagreeable posture." *

While busy faction was thus at work, both in and out of Congress, to undermine the fame and authority of Washington, General Howe, according to his own threat, was preparing to "drive him beyond the mountains."

* Gates's *Papers*, N. Y. Hist. Soc. Lib.

On the 4th of December, Captain Allen McLane, a vigilant officer already mentioned, of the Maryland line, brought word to head-quarters, that an attack was to be made that very night on the camp at White Marsh. Washington made his dispositions to receive the meditated assault, and, in the meantime, detached McLane with one hundred men to reconnoiter. The latter met the van of the enemy about eleven o'clock at night, on the Germantown road; attacked it at the Three Mile Run, forced it to change its line of march, and hovered about and impeded it throughout the night. About three o'clock in the morning the alarm-gun announced the approach of the enemy. They appeared at daybreak, and encamped on Chestnut Hill, within three miles of Washington's right wing. Brigadier-General James Irvine, with six hundred of the Pennsylvania militia, was sent out to skirmish with their light advanced parties. He encountered them at the foot of the hill, but after a short conflict, in which several were killed and wounded, his troops gave way and fled in all directions, leaving him and four or five of his men wounded on the field, who were taken prisoners.

General Howe passed the day in reconnoitering, and at night changed his ground, and

moved to a hill on the left, and within a mile of the American line. It was his wish to have a general action, but to have it on advantageous terms. He had scrutinized Washington's position and pronounced it inaccessible. For three days he manœuvred to draw him from it, shifting his own position occasionally, but still keeping on advantageous ground. Washington was not to be decoyed. He knew the vast advantages which superior science, discipline, and experience, gave the enemy in open field fight, and remained within his lines. All his best officers approved of his policy. Several sharp skirmishes occurred at Edge Hill and elsewhere, in which Morgan's riflemen and the Maryland militia were concerned. There was loss on both sides, but the Americans gave way before a great superiority of numbers.

In one of these skirmishes General Reed had a narrow escape. He was reconnoitering the enemy at Washington's request, when he fell in with some of the Pennsylvania militia who had been scattered, and endeavored to rally and lead them forward. His horse was shot through the head, and came with him to the ground; the enemy's flankers were running to bayonet him, as he was recovering from his fall, when Captain Allen McLane came up with his men in time to drive them

off and rescue him. He was conveyed from the field by a light horseman.*

On the 7th there was every appearance that Howe meditated an attack on the left wing. Washington's heart now beat high, and he prepared for a warm and decisive action. In the course of the day he rode through every brigade, giving directions how the attack was to be met, and exhorting his troops to depend mainly on the bayonet. His men were inspirited by his words, but still more by his looks, so calm and determined; for the soldier regards the demeanor more than the words of his general in the hour of peril.

The day wore away with nothing but skirmishes, in which Morgan's riflemen, and the Maryland militia under Colonel Gist, rendered good service. An attack was expected in the night, or early in the morning; but no attack took place. The spirit manifested by the Americans in their recent contests, had rendered the British commanders cautious.

The next day, in the afternoon, the enemy were again in motion; but instead of advancing, filed off to the left, halted, and lit up a long string of fires on the heights; behind which they retreated, silently and precipitately, in the night. By the time Washington re-

* *Life and Cor. of Reed*, vol. i., p. 351.

ceived intelligence of their movement, they were in full march by two or three routes for Philadelphia. He immediately detached light parties to fall upon their rear, but they were too far on the way for any but light horse to overtake them.

An intelligent observer writes to President Wharton from the camp: "As all their movements, added to their repeated declarations of driving General Washington over the Blue Mountains, were calculated to assure us of their having come out with the determination to fight, it was thought prudent to keep our post upon the hills, near the church. I understand it was resolved, if they did not begin the attack soon, to have fought them at all events, it not being supposed that they could, consistent with their own feelings, have secretly stolen into the city so suddenly after so long gasconading on what they intended to do." *

Here then was another occasion of which the enemies of Washington availed themselves to deride his cautious policy. Yet it was clearly dictated by true wisdom. His heart yearned for a general encounter with the enemy. In his despatch to the President of Congress, he

* Letter of Elias Boudinot, Commissary of Prisoners, to President Wharton. *Life and Cor. of Reed*, vol. i., p. 351.

writes, "I sincerely wish that they had made an attack; as the issue, in all probability, from the disposition of our troops and the strong situation of our camp, would have been fortunate and happy. At the same time I must add, that reason, prudence, and every principle of policy forbade us from quitting our post to attack them. Nothing but success would have justified the measure; and this could not be expected from their position.

At this time, one of the earliest measures recommended by the Board of War, and adopted by Congress, showed the increasing influence of the cabal; two inspectors-general were to be appointed for the promotion of discipline and reformation of abuses in the army; and one of the persons chosen for this important office was Conway, with the rank, too, of major-general! This was tacitly in defiance of the opinion so fully expressed by Washington of the demerits of the man, and the ruinous effects to be apprehended from his promotion over the heads of brigadiers of superior claims. Conway, however, was the secret colleague of Gates, and Gates was now the rising sun.

Winter had now set in with all its severity. The troops, worn down by long and hard service, had need of repose. Poorly clad, also, and almost destitute of blankets, they required

a warmer shelter than mere tents against the inclemencies of the season. The nearest towns which would afford winter-quarters, were Lancaster, York, and Carlisle; but should the army retire to any one of these, a large and fertile district would be exposed to be foraged by the foe, and its inhabitants, perhaps, to be dragooned into submission.

Much anxiety was felt by the Pennsylvania Legislature on the subject, who were desirous that the army should remain in the field. General Reed, in a letter to the president of that body, writes: "A line of winter-quarters had been proposed and supported by some of his [Washington's] principal officers; but I believe I may assure you he will not come into it, but take post as near the enemy, and cover as much of the country as the nakedness and wretched condition of some part of the army will admit. To keep the field entirely is impracticable, and so you would think if you saw the plight we were in. You will soon know the plan, and as it has been adopted principally upon the opinions of the gentlemen of this State, I hope it will give satisfaction to you and the gentlemen around you. If it is not doing what we would, it is doing what we can; and I must say the general has shown a truly feeling and patriotic respect for us on this oc-

casion, in which you would agree with me, if you knew all the circumstances."

The plan adopted by Washington, after holding a council of war, and weighing the discordant opinions of his officers, was to hut the army for the winter at Valley Forge, in Chester County, on the west side of the Schuylkill, about twenty miles from Philadelphia. Here he would be able to keep a vigilant eye on that city, and at the same time protect a great extent of country.

Sad and dreary was the march to Valley Forge; uncheered by the recollection of any recent triumph, as was the march to winter-quarters in the preceding year. Hungry and cold were the poor fellows who had so long been keeping the field; for provisions were scant, clothing worn out, and so badly off were they for shoes, that the footsteps of many might be tracked in blood. Yet at this very time we are told, "hogsheads of shoes, stockings, and clothing, were lying at different places on the roads and in the woods, perishing for want of teams, or of money to pay the teamsters." *

Such were the consequences of the derangement of the commissariat.

Arrived at Valley Forge on the 17th, the troops had still to brave the wintry weather

* Gordon's *Hist. Am. War*, vol. ii., p. 279.

in their tents, until they could cut down trees and construct huts for their accommodation. Those who were on the sick list had to seek temporary shelter wherever it could be found, among the farmers of the neighborhood. According to the regulations in the orderly book, each hut was to be fourteen feet by sixteen, with walls of logs filled in with clay, six feet and a half high; the fireplaces were of logs plastered; and logs split into rude planks or slabs furnished the roofing. A hut was allotted to twelve non-commissioned officers and soldiers. A general officer had a hut to himself. The same was allowed to the staff of each brigade and regiment, and the field-officer of each regiment; and a hut to the commissioned officers of each company. The huts of the soldiery fronted on streets. Those of the officers formed a line in the rear, and the encampment gradually assumed the look of a rude military village.

Scarce had the troops been two days employed in these labors, when, before daybreak on the 22d, word was brought that a body of the enemy had made a sortie toward Chester, apparently on a foraging expedition. Washington issued orders to Generals Huntington and Varnum to hold their troops in readiness to march against them. Their replies bespeak

the forlorn state of the army. "Fighting will be far preferable to starving," writes Huntington. "My brigade are out of provisions, nor can the commissary obtain any meat. I have used every argument my imagination can invent to make the soldiers easy, but I despair of being able to do it much longer."

"It's a very pleasing circumstance to the division under my command," writes Varnum, "that there is a probability of their marching; three days successively we have been destitute of bread. Two days we have been entirely without meat. The men must be supplied, or they cannot be commanded."

In fact, a dangerous mutiny had broken out among the famishing troops in the preceding night, which their officers had had great difficulty in quelling.

Washington instantly wrote to the President of Congress on the subject. "I do not know from what cause this alarming deficiency or rather total failure of supplies arises; but unless more vigorous exertions and better regulations take place in that line (the commissaries' department) immediately, the army must dissolve. I have done all in my power by remonstrating, by writing, by ordering the commissaries on this head, from time to time; but without any good effect, or obtaining more

than a present scanty relief. Owing to this, the march of the army has been delayed on more than one interesting occasion, in the course of the present campaign; and had a body of the enemy crossed the Schuylkill this morning, as I had reason to expect, the divisions which I ordered to be in readiness to march and meet them could not have moved."

Scarce had Washington despatched this letter, when he learnt that the Legislature of Pennsylvania had addressed a remonstrance to Congress against his going into winter-quarters, instead of keeping in the open field. This letter, received in his forlorn situation, surrounded by an unhoused, scantily clad, half-starved army, shivering in the midst of December's snow and cold, put an end to his forbearance, and drew from him another letter to the President of Congress, dated on the 23d, which we shall largely quote; not only for its manly and truthful eloquence, but for the exposition it gives of the difficulties of his situation, mainly caused by unwise and intermeddling legislation.

And first as to the commissariat:

"Though I have been tender heretofore," writes he, "of giving any opinion, or lodging complaints, as the change in that department took place contrary to my judgment, and the

consequences thereof were predicted; yet, finding that the inactivity of the army, whether for want of provisions, clothes, or other essentials, is charged to my account, not only by the common vulgar, but by those in power, it is time to speak plain in exculpation of myself. With truth, then, I can declare, that no man, in my opinion, ever had his measures more impeded than I have by every department of the army.

"Since the month of July, we have had no assistance from the quartermaster-general; and to want of assistance from this department, the commissary-general charges great part of his deficiency. To this I am to add, that notwithstanding it is a standing order, and often repeated, that the troops shall always have two days' provisions by them, that they might be ready at any sudden call; yet an opportunity has scarcely ever offered of taking an advantage of the enemy, that it has not been either totally obstructed, or greatly impeded on this account. . . . As a proof of the little benefit received from a clothier-general, as a further proof of the inability of an army, under the circumstances of this, to perform the common duties of soldiers (besides a number of men confined to hospitals for want of shoes, and others in farmers' houses on the same account),

we have, by a field return this day made, no less than two thousand eight hundred and ninety-eight men, now in camp unfit for duty, because they are barefoot, and otherwise naked. By the same return, it appears that our whole strength in continental troops, including the Eastern brigades, which have joined us since the surrender of General Burgoyne, exclusive of the Maryland troops sent to Wilmington, amounts to no more than eight thousand two hundred in camp fit for duty; notwithstanding which, and that since the 4th instant, our numbers fit for duty, from the hardships and exposures they have undergone, particularly on account of blankets (numbers have been obliged, and still are, to sit up all night by fires, instead of taking comfortable rest in a natural and common way), have decreased near two thousand men.

"We find gentlemen, without knowing whether the army was really going into winter-quarters or not (for I am sure no resolution of mine could warrant the remonstrance), reprobating the measure as much as if they thought the soldiers were made of stocks or stones, and equally insensible of frost and snow; and moreover, as if they conceived it easily practicable for an inferior army, under the disadvantages I described ours to be—which are by no means

exaggerated—to confine a superior one, in all respects well appointed and provided for a winter's campaign, within the city of Philadelphia, and to cover from depredation and waste the States of Pennsylvania and Jersey. But what makes this matter still more extraordinary in my eye, is, that these very gentlemen, who are well apprised of the nakedness of the troops from ocular demonstration, who thought their own soldiers worse clad than others, and who advised me near a month ago to postpone the execution of a plan I was about to adopt, in consequence of a resolve in Congress for seizing clothes, under strong assurances that an ample supply would be collected in ten days, agreeably to a decree of the State (not one article of which, by the by, is yet come to hand), should think a winter's campaign, and the covering of those States from the invasion of an enemy, so easy and practicable a business. I can assure those gentlemen, that it is a much easier, and less distressing thing, to draw remonstrances in a comfortable room by a good fireside, than to occupy a cold, bleak hill, and sleep under frost and snow, without clothes or blankets. However, although they seem to have little feeling for the naked and distressed soldiers, I feel abundantly for them, and, from my soul, I pity

those miseries, which it is neither in my power to relieve nor prevent.

"It is for these reasons, therefore, that I have dwelt upon the subject; and it adds not a little to my other difficulties and distress, to find that much more is expected from me than is possible to be performed, and that, upon the ground of safety and policy, I am obliged to conceal the true state of the army from public view, and thereby expose myself to detraction and calumny."

In the present exigency, to save his camp from desolation, and to relieve his starving soldiery, he was compelled to exercise the authority recently given him by Congress, to forage the country round, seize supplies wherever he could find them, and pay for them in money or in certificates redeemable by Congress. He exercised these powers with great reluctance; rurally inclined himself, he had a strong sympathy with the cultivators of the soil, and ever regarded the yeomanry with a paternal eye. He was apprehensive, moreover, of irritating the jealousy of military sway, prevalent throughout the country, and of corrupting the morals of the army. "Such procedures," writes he to the President of Congress, "may give a momentary relief; but if repeated, will prove of the most pernicious consequence. Beside

spreading disaffection, jealousy, and fear among the people, they never fail, even in the most veteran troops, under the most rigid and exact discipline, to raise in the soldiery a disposition to licentiousness, to plunder and robbery, difficult to suppress afterward, and which has proved not only ruinous to the inhabitants, but in many instances to armies themselves. I regret the occasion that compelled us to the measure the other day, and shall consider it the greatest of our misfortunes if we should be under the necessity of practising it again."

How truly, in all these trying scenes of his military career does the patriot rise above the soldier!

With these noble and high-spirited appeals to Congress, we close Washington's operations for 1777; one of the most arduous and eventful years of his military life, and one of the most trying to his character and fortunes. He began it with an empty army chest, and a force dwindled down to four thousand half-disciplined men. Throughout the year he had had to contend, not merely with the enemy, but with the parsimony and meddlesome interference of Congress. In his most critical times that body had left him without funds and without reinforcements. It had made some promotions contrary to his advice, and contrary to

military usage, thereby wronging and disgusting some of his bravest officers. It had changed the commissariat in the very midst of a campaign, and thereby thrown the whole service into confusion.

Among so many cross-purposes and discouragements, it was a difficult task for Washington to "keep the life and soul of the army together." Yet he had done so. Marvellous indeed was the manner in which he had soothed the discontents of his aggrieved officers, and reconciled them to an ill-requiting service; and still more marvellous the manner in which he had breathed his own spirit of patience and perseverance in his yeoman soldiery, during their sultry marchings and countermarchings through the Jerseys, under all kinds of privations, with no visible object of pursuit to stimulate their ardor, hunting, as it were, the rumored apparitions of an unseen fleet.

All this time, too, while endeavoring to ascertain and counteract the operations of Lord Howe upon the ocean, and his brother upon the land, he was directing and aiding military measures against Burgoyne in the North. Three games were in a manner going on under his supervision. The operations of the commander-in-chief are not always most obvious to the public eye; victories may be planned in his tent,

of which subordinate generals get the credit; and most of the moves which ended in giving a triumphant check to Burgoyne, may be traced to Washington's shifting camp in the Jerseys.

It has been an irksome task in some of the preceding chapters, to notice the under-current of intrigue and management by which some part of this year's campaign was disgraced; yet even-handed justice requires that such machinations should be exposed. We have shown how successful they were in displacing the noble-hearted Schuyler from the head of the Northern department; the same machinations were now at work to undermine the commander-in-chief, and elevate the putative hero of Saratoga on his ruins. He was painfully aware of them; yet in no part of the war did he more thoroughly evince that magnanimity which was his grand characteristic, than in the last scenes of this campaign, where he rose above the tauntings of the press, the sneerings of the cabal, the murmurs of the public, the suggestions of some of his friends, and the throbbing impulses of his own courageous heart, and adhered to that Fabian policy which he considered essential to the safety of the cause. To dare is often the impulse of selfish ambition or hare-brained valor: to forbear is at times the proof of real greatness.

Chapter IV.

Gates in the Ascendant—The Conway Letter—Suspicions—Consequent Correspondence between Gates and Washington—Warning Letter from Dr. Craik—Anonymous Letters—Projected Expedition to Canada—Lafayette, Gates, and the Board of War.

WHILE censure and detraction had thus dogged Washington throughout his harassing campaign, and followed him to his forlorn encampment at Valley Forge, Gates was the constant theme of popular eulogium, and was held up by the cabal, as the only one capable of retrieving the desperate fortunes of the South. Letters from his friends in Congress urged him to hasten on, take his seat at the head of the Board of War, assume the management of military affairs, and *save the country!*

Gates was not a strong-minded man. Is it a wonder, then, that his brain should be bewildered by the fumes of incense offered up on

every side? In the midst of his triumph, however, while feasting on the sweets of adulation, came the withering handwriting on the wall! It is an epistle from his friend Mifflin. "My dear General," writes he, "an extract from Conway's letter to you has been procured and sent to headquarters. The extract was a collection of just sentiments, yet such as should not have been intrusted to any of your family. General Washington inclosed it to Conway without remarks. . . . My dear General, take care of your sincerity and frank disposition; they cannot injure yourself, but may injure some of your best friends. Affectionately yours."

Nothing could surpass the trouble and confusion of mind of Gates on the perusal of this letter. Part of his correspondence with Conway had been sent to headquarters. But what part? What was the purport and extent of the alleged extracts? How had they been obtained? Who had sent them? Mifflin's letter specified nothing; and this silence as to particulars, left an unbounded field for tormenting conjecture. In fact, Mifflin knew nothing in particular when he wrote; nor did any of the cabal. The laconic nature of Washington's note to Conway had thrown them all in confusion. None knew the extent of the correspondence discovered,

nor how far they might be individually compromised.

Gates, in his perplexity, suspected that his portfolio had been stealthily opened and his letters copied. But which of them?—and by whom? He wrote to Conway and Mifflin, anxiously inquiring what part of their correspondence had been thus surreptitiously obtained, and "who was the villain that had played him this treacherous trick. There is scarcely a man living," says he, "who takes a greater care of his letters than I do. I never fail to lock them up, and keep the key in my pocket. . . . No punishment is too severe for the wretch who betrayed me; and I doubt not your friendship for me, as well as your zeal for our safety, will bring the name of this miscreant to light." *

Gates made rigid inquiries among the gentlemen of his staff; all disavowed any knowledge of the matter. In the confusion and perturbation of his mind, his suspicions glanced, or were turned, upon Colonel Hamilton, as the channel of communication, he having had free access to headquarters during his late mission from the commander-in-chief. In this state of mental trepidation, Gates wrote, on the 8th of December, the following letter to Washington:

* Gates's *Papers*, N. Y. Hist. Lib.

"SIR,—I shall not attempt to describe what, as a private gentleman, I cannot help feeling, on representing to my mind the disagreeable situation in which confidential letters, when exposed to public inspection, may place an unsuspecting correspondent; but, as a public officer, I conjure your Excellency to give me all the assistance you can in tracing the author of the infidelity which put extracts from General Conway's letters to me into your hands. Those letters have been stealingly copied, but which of them, when, and by whom, is to me as yet an unfathomable secret. . . . It is, I believe, in your Excellency's power to do me and the United States a very important service, by detecting a wretch who may betray me, and capitally injure the very operations under your immediate directions. . . . The crime being eventually so important, that the least loss of time may be attended with the worst consequences, and it being unknown to me whether the letter came to you from a member of Congress, or from an officer, I shall have the honor of transmitting a copy of this to the president, that the Congress may, in concert with your Excellency, obtain as soon as possible a discovery which so deeply affects the safety of the States. Crimes of that magnitude ought not to remain unpunished." A copy of this letter

was transmitted by Gates to the President of Congress.

Washington replied with characteristic dignity and candor. "Your letter of the 8th ultimo," writes he (January 4th), "came to my hand a few days ago, and, to my great surprise, informed me that a copy of it had been sent to Congress, for what reason I find myself unable to account; but, as some end was doubtless intended to be answered by it, I am laid under the disagreeable necessity of returning my answer through the same channel, lest any member of that honorable body should harbor an unfavorable suspicion of my having practised some indirect means to come at the contents of the confidential letters between you and General Conway.

"I am to inform you, then, that Colonel Wilkinson, on his way to Congress, in the month of October last, fell in with Lord Stirling at Reading, and, not in confidence, that I ever understood, informed his aide-de-camp, Major McWilliams, that General Conway had written this to you: 'Heaven has been determined to save your country, or a weak general and bad counsellors would have ruined it.' Lord Stirling, from motives of friendship, transmitted the account, with this remark, 'The inclosed was communicated by Colonel Wilkinson

to Major McWilliams. Such wicked duplicity of conduct I shall always think it my duty to detect.' "

Washington adds, that the letter written by him to Conway was merely to show that gentleman that he was not unapprised of his intriguing disposition. "Neither this letter," continues he, "nor the information which occasioned it, was ever directly or indirectly communicated by me to a single officer in this army, out of my own family, excepting the Marquis de Lafayette, who, having been spoken to on the subject by General Conway, applied for and saw, under injunctions of secrecy, the letter which contained Wilkinson's information; so desirous was I of concealing every matter that could, in its consequences, give the smallest interruption to the tranquillity of this army, or afford a gleam of hope to the enemy by dissensions therein." . . . "Till Lord Stirling's letter came to my hands, I never knew that General Conway, whom I viewed in the light of a stranger to you, was a correspondent of yours: much less did I suspect that I was the subject of your confidential letters. Pardon me, then, for adding, that so far from conceiving the safety of the States can be affected, or in the smallest degree injured, by a discovery of this kind, or that I should be called upon in

such solemn terms to point out the author, I considered the information as coming from yourself, and given to forewarn, and consequently to forearm me, against a secret enemy, or in other words, a dangerous incendiary ; in which character, sooner or later, this country will know General Conway. But in this, as in other matters of late, I have found myself mistaken."

This clear and ample answer explained the enigma of the laconic note to Conway, and showed that the betrayal of the defamatory correspondence was due to the babbling of Wilkinson. Following the mode adopted by Gates, Washington transmitted his reply through the hands of the President of Congress, and thus this matter, which he had generously kept secret, became blazoned before Congress and the world.

A few days after writing the above letter, Washington received the following warning from his old and faithful friend, Dr. Craik, dated from Maryland, January 6th. "Notwithstanding your unwearied diligence and the unparalleled sacrifice of domestic happiness and ease of mind which you have made for the good of your country, yet you are not wanting in secret enemies, who would rob you of the great and truly deserved esteem your country

has for you. Base and villainous men, through chagrin, envy, or ambition, are endeavoring to lessen you in the minds of the people, and taking underhand methods to traduce your character. The morning I left camp, I was informed that a strong faction was forming against you in the new Board of War, and in the Congress. . . . The method they are taking is by holding General Gates up to the people, and making them believe that you have had a number three or four times greater than the enemy, and have done nothing; that Philadelphia was given up by your management, and that you have had many opportunities of defeating the enemy. It is said they dare not appear openly as your enemies; but that the new Board of War is composed of such leading men, as will throw such obstacles and difficulties in your way as to force you to resign." *

An anonymous letter to Patrick Henry, dated from Yorktown, January 12th, says among other things, "We have only passed the Red Sea; a dreary wilderness is still before us, and unless a Moses or a Joshua are raised up in our behalf, we must perish before we reach the promised land. . . . But is our case desperate? By no means. We have wis-

* Sparks. *Washington's Writings*, vol. v., p. 493.

dom, virtue, and strength enough to save us, if they could be called into action. The northern army has shown us what Americans are capable of doing with a general at their head. The spirit of the southern army is no way inferior to the spirit of the northern. A Gates, a Lee, or a Conway, would in a few weeks render them an irresistible body of men.

"The last of the above officers has accepted of the new office of inspector-general of our army, in order to reform abuses; but the remedy is only a palliative one. In one of his letters to a friend, he says, 'a great and good God hath decreed America to be free, or the [general] and weak counsellors would have ruined her long ago.'" *

Another anonymous paper, probably by the same hand, dated January 17th, and sent to Congress, under a cover directed to the president, Mr. Laurens, decried all the proceedings of the southern army, declaring that the proper method of attacking, beating, and conquering the enemy, had never as yet been adopted by the commander-in-chief; that the late success to the northward was owing to a change of the commanders; that the southern army would have been alike successful had a similar change taken place. After dwelling on the

* Sparks. *Washington's Writings*, vol. v., p. 493.

evils and derangements prevalent in every department, it draws the conclusion, "That the head cannot possibly be sound, when the whole body is disordered; that the people of America have been guilty of idolatry, by making a man their God, and the God of heaven and earth will convince them by woful experience, that he is only a man; that no good may be expected from the standing army until Baal and his worshippers are banished from the camp." *

Instead of laying this mischievous paper before Congress, Mr. Laurens remitted it to Washington. He received the following reply: "I cannot sufficiently express the obligations I feel to you for your friendship and politeness, upon an occasion in which I am so deeply interested. I was not unapprised that a malignant faction had been for some time forming to my prejudice; which, conscious as I am of having ever done all in my power to answer the important purposes of the trust reposed in me, could not but give me some pain on a personal account. But my chief concern arises from an apprehension of the dangerous consequences which intestine dissensions may produce to the common cause.

"My enemies take an ungenerous advantage of me. They know the delicacy of my situa-

* *Ibid.*, p. 497.

tion, and that motives of policy deprive me of the defense I might otherwise make against their insidious attacks. They know I cannot combat their insinuations, however injurious, without disclosing secrets which it is of the utmost moment to conceal. But why should I expect to be exempt from censure, the unfailing lot of an elevated station? Merit and talent, with which I can have no pretensions of rivalship, have ever been subject to it. My heart tells me, that it has ever been my unremitted aim to do the best that circumstances would permit; yet I may have been very often mistaken in my judgment of the means, and may in many instances deserve the imputation of error."

Gates was disposed to mark his advent to power by a striking operation. A notable project had been concerted by him and the Board of War for a winter irruption into Canada. An expedition was to proceed from Albany, cross Lake Champlain on the ice, burn the British shipping at St. John's, and press forward to Montreal. Washington was not consulted in the matter: the project was submitted to Congress, and sanctioned by them without his privity.

One object of the scheme was to detach the Marquis de Lafayette from Washington, to

whom he was devotedly attached, and bring him into the interests of the cabal. For this purpose he was to have the command of the expedition, an appointment which it was thought would tempt his military ambition. Conway was to be second in command, and it was trusted that his address and superior intelligence would virtually make him the leader.

The first notice that Washington received of the project was in a letter from Gates, inclosing one to Lafayette, informing the latter of his appointment, and requiring his attendance at Yorktown to receive his instructions.

Gates, in his letter to Washington, asked his opinion and advice, evidently as a matter of form. The latter expressed himself obliged by the "polite request," but observed that, as he neither knew the extent of the objects in view, nor the means to be employed to effect them, it was not in his power to pass any judgment upon the subject. He wished success to the enterprise, "both as it might advance the public good and confer personal honor on the Marquis de Lafayette, for whom he had a very particular esteem and regard."

The cabal, however, had overshot their mark. Lafayette, who was aware of their intrigues, was so disgusted by the want of deference and respect to the commander-in-chief evinced in the

whole proceeding, that he would at once have declined the appointment, had not Washington himself advised him strongly to accept it.

He accordingly proceeded to Yorktown, where Gates already had his little court of schemers and hangers on. Lafayette found him at table, presiding with great hilarity, for he was social in his habits, and in the flush of recent success. The young marquis had a cordial welcome to his board, which in its buoyant conviviality contrasted with the sober decencies of that of the thoughtful commander-in-chief, in his dreary encampment at Valley Forge. Gates, in his excitement, was profuse of promises. Everything was to be made smooth and easy for Lafayette. He was to have at least two thousand five hundred fighting men under him. Stark, the veteran Stark, was ready to co-operate with a body of Green Mountain Boys. "Indeed," cries Gates, chuckling, "General Stark will have burnt the fleet before your arrival!"

It was near the end of the repast. The wine had circulated freely, and toasts had been given according to the custom of the day. The marquis thought it time to show his flag. One toast, he observed, had been omitted, which he would now propose. Glasses were accordingly filled, and he gave, "The commander-in-chief

of the American armies." The toast was received without cheering.

Lafayette was faithful to the flag he had unfurled. In accepting the command, he considered himself detached from the main army and under the immediate orders of the commander-in-chief. He had a favorable opinion of the military talents of Conway, but he was aware of the game he was playing; he made a point, therefore, of having the Baron de Kalb appointed to the expedition, whose commission being of older date than that of Conway, would give him the precedence of that officer, and make him second in command. This was reluctantly ceded by the cabal, who found themselves baffled by the loyalty in friendship of the youthful soldier.

Lafayette set out for Albany without any very sanguine expectations. Writing to Washington from Flemington, amid the difficulties of winter travel, he says: "I go on very slowly, sometimes drenched by rain, sometimes covered with snow, and not entertaining many handsome thoughts about the projected incursion into Canada. Lake Champlain is too cold for producing the least bit of laurel, and, if I am not starved, I shall be as proud as if I had gained three battles." *

* Sparks's *Cor. Am. Rev.*, vol. ii., p. 74.

Chapter V.

Gates Undertakes to Explain the Conway Correspondence—Washington's Searching Analysis of the Explanation—Close of the Correspondence—Spurious Letters Published—Lafayette and the Canada Expedition—His Perplexities—Counsels of Washington.

WASHINGTON'S letter of the 4th of January, on the subject of the Conway correspondence, had not reached General Gates until the 22d of January, after his arrival at Yorktown. No sooner did Gates learn from its context, that all Washington's knowledge of that correspondence was confined to a single paragraph of a letter, and that merely as quoted in conversation by Wilkinson, than the whole matter appeared easily to be explained or shuffled off. He accordingly took pen in hand, and addressed Washington as follows, on the 23d of January: "The letter which I had the honor

to receive yesterday from your Excellency, has relieved me from unspeakable uneasiness. I now anticipate the pleasure it will give you when you discover that what has been conveyed to you for an extract of General Conway's letter to me, was not an information which friendly motives induced a man of honor to give, that injured virtue might be forearmed against secret enemies. The paragraph which your Excellency has condescended to transcribe, is spurious. It was certainly fabricated to answer the most selfish and wicked purposes."

He then goes on to declare that the genuine letter of Conway was perfectly harmless, containing judicious remarks upon the want of discipline in the army, but making no mention of weak generals or bad counsellors. "Particular actions rather than persons were blamed, but with impartiality, and I am convinced he did not aim at lessening, in my opinion, the merit of any person. His letter was perfectly harmless; however, now that various reports have been circulated concerning its contents, they ought not to be submitted to the solemn inspection of those who stand most high in the public esteem.

"Anxiety and jealousy would arise in the breast of very respectable officers, who, sensi-

ble of faults which inexperience and that alone, may have led them into, would be unnecessarily disgusted, if they perceived a probability of such errors being recorded.

"Honor forbids it, and patriotism demands that I should return the letter into the hands of the writer. I will do it; but, at the same time, I declare that the paragraph conveyed to your Excellency as a genuine part of it, was, in words as well as in substance, a wicked forgery.

"About the beginning of December, I was informed that letter had occasioned an explanation between your Excellency and that gentleman. Not knowing whether the whole letter or a part of it had been stealingly copied, but fearing malice had altered its original texture, I own, sir, that a dread of the mischiefs which might attend the forgery, I suspected would be made, put me some time in a most painful situation. When I communicated to the officers in my family the intelligence which I had received, they all entreated me to rescue their characters from the suspicions they justly conceived themselves liable to, until the guilty persons should be known. To facilitate the discovery, I wrote to your Excellency; but, unable to learn whether General Conway's letter had been transmitted to you by a member

of Congress, or a gentleman in the army, I was afraid much time would be lost in the course of the inquiry, and that the States might receive some capital injury from the infidelity of the person who I thought had stolen a copy of the obnoxious letter. Was it not probable that the secrets of the army might be obtained and betrayed through the same means to the enemy? For this reason, sir, not doubting that Congress would most cheerfully concur with you in tracing out the criminal, I wrote to the president, and inclosed to him a copy of my letter to your Excellency.

"About the time I was forwarding those letters, Brigadier-General Wilkinson returned to Albany. I informed him of the treachery which had been committed, but I concealed from him the measures I was pursuing to unmask the author. Wilkinson answered, he was assured it never would come to light; and endeavored to fix my suspicions on Lieutenant-Colonel Troup,* who he said, might have incautiously conversed on the substance of General Conway's letter with Colonel Hamilton, whom you had sent not long before to Albany. I did not listen to this insinuation against your aide-de-camp and mine."

In the original draft of this letter, which we

* At that time an aide-de-camp of Gates.

have seen among the papers of General Gates, he adds, as a reason for not listening to the insinuation, that he considered it even as ungenerous. "But," pursues he, "the light your Excellency has just assisted me with, exhibiting the many qualifications which are necessarily blended together in the head and heart of General Wilkinson, I would not omit this fact; it will enable your Excellency to judge whether or not he would scruple to make such a forgery as that which he now stands charged with, and ought to be exemplarily punished." This, with considerable more to the same purport, intended to make Wilkinson the scape-goat, stands cancelled in the draft, and was omitted in the letter sent to Washington; but by some means, fair or foul, it came to the knowledge of Wilkinson, who has published it at length in his memoirs, and who, it will be found, resented the imputation thus conveyed.

General Conway, also, in a letter to Washington (dated January 27th), informs him that the letter had been returned to him by Gates, and that he found with great satisfaction that "the paragraph so much spoken of did not exist in the said letter, nor anything like it." He had intended, he adds, to publish the letter, but had been dissuaded by President Laurens and two or three members of Congress, to

whom he had shown it, lest it should inform the enemy of a misunderstanding among the American generals. He therefore depended upon the justice, candor, and generosity of General Washington, to put a stop to the forgery.

On the 9th of February, Washington wrote Gates a long and searching reply to his letters of the 8th and 23d of January, analyzing them, and showing how, in spirit and import, they contradicted each other; and how sometimes the same letter contradicted itself. How in the first letter, the reality of the extracts was by implication allowed, and the only solicitude shown was to find out the person who brought them to light; while, in the second letter, the whole was pronounced, "in word as well as in substance, a wicked forgery." "It is not my intention," observes Washington, "to contradict this assertion, but only to intimate some considerations which tend to induce a supposition, that, though none of General Conway's letters to you contained the offensive passage mentioned, there might have been something in them too nearly related to it, that could give such an extraordinary alarm. If this were not the case, how easy in the first instance to have declared there was nothing exceptionable in them, and to have produced the letters them-

selves in support of it? The propriety of the objections, suggested against submitting them to inspection may very well be questioned. 'The various reports circulated concerning their contents,' were perhaps so many arguments for making them speak for themselves, to place the matter upon the footing of certainty. Concealment in an affair which had made so much noise, though not by *my* means, will naturally lead men to conjecture the worst, and it will be a subject of speculation even to candor itself. The anxiety and jealousy you apprehend from revealing the letter, will be very apt to be increased by suppressing it."

We forbear to follow Washington through his stern analysis, but we cannot omit the concluding paragraph of his strictures on the character of Conway.

"Notwithstanding the hopeful presages you are pleased to figure to yourself of General Conway's firm and constant friendship to America, I cannot persuade myself to retract the prediction concerning him, which you so emphatically wish had not been inserted in my last. A better acquaintance with him, than I have reason to think you have had, from what you say, and a concurrence of circumstances, oblige me to give him but little credit for the qualifications of his heart, of which, at

least, I beg leave to assume the privilege of being a tolerable judge. Were it necessary, more instances than one might be adduced, from his behavior and conversation, to manifest that he is capable of all the malignity of detraction, and all the meanness of intrigue, to gratify the absurd resentment of disappointed vanity, or to answer the purposes of personal aggrandizement, and promote the interest of faction."

Gates evidently quailed beneath this letter. In his reply, February 19th, he earnestly hoped that no more of that time, so precious to the public, might be lost upon the subject of General Conway's letter.

"Whether that gentleman," says he, "does or does not deserve the suspicions you express, would be entirely indifferent to me, did he not possess an office of high rank in the army of the United States. As to the gentleman, I have no personal connection with him, nor had I any correspondence previous to his writing the letter which has given offense, nor have I since written to him, save to certify what I know to be the contents of that letter. He, therefore, must be responsible; as I heartily dislike controversy, even upon my own account, and much more in a matter wherein I was only accidentally concerned," etc., etc.

The following was the dignified but freezing note with which Washington closed this correspondence.

"VALLEY FORGE, *24th Feb.* 1778.

"SIR,—I yesterday received your favor of the 19th instant. I am as averse to controversy as any man; and, had I not been forced into it, you never would have had occasion to impute to me even the shadow of a disposition towards it. Your repeatedly and solemnly disclaiming any offensive views in those matters which have been the subject of our past correspondence, makes me willing to close with the desire you express of burying them hereafter in silence, and, as far as future events will permit, oblivion. My temper leads me to peace and harmony with all men; and it is peculiarly my wish to avoid any personal feuds or dissensions with those who are embarked in the same great national interests with myself, as every difference of this kind must, in its consequences, be very injurious. I am, sir," etc.

Among the various insidious artifices resorted to about this time to injure the character of Washington, and destroy public confidence in his sincerity, was the publication of a series of letters purporting to be from him to some

members of his family, and to his agent, Mr. Lund Washington, which, if genuine, would prove him to be hollow-hearted and faithless to the cause he was pretending to uphold. They had appeared in England in a pamphlet form, as if printed from originals and drafts found in possession of a black servant of Washington, who had been left behind ill, at Fort Lee, when it was evacuated. They had recently been reprinted at New York in Rivington's *Royal Gazette;* the first letter making its appearance on the 14th of February. It had also been printed at New York in a handbill, and extracts published in a Philadelphia paper.

Washington took no notice of this publication at the time, but in private correspondence with his friends, he observes: "These letters are written with a great deal of art. The intermixture of so many family circumstances (which, by the by, want foundation in truth) gives an air of plausibility, which renders the villainy greater; as the whole is a contrivance to answer the most diabolical purposes. Who the author of them is, I know not. From information or acquaintance he must have had some knowledge of the component parts of my family; but he has most egregiously mistaken facts in several instances. The design of his

labors is as clear as the sun in its meridian brightness."* And in another letter, he observes: "They were written to show that I was an enemy to independence, and with a view to create distrust and jealousy. It is no easy matter to decide whether the villainy or the artifice of these letters is greatest."†

The author of these letters was never discovered. He entirely failed in his object; the letters were known at once to be forgeries.‡

* Letter to Gen. Henry Lee, Virginia.—Sparks's *Writings of Washington*, vol. v., 378.

† Letter to Landon Carter. *Idem.*, p. 391.

‡ The introduction to the letters states them to have been transmitted to England by an officer serving in Delancey's corps of loyalists, who gives the following account of the way he came by them: "Among the prisoners at Fort Lee, I espied a mulatto fellow, whom I thought I recollected, and who confirmed my conjectures by gazing very earnestly at me. I asked him if he knew me. At first, he was unwilling to own it; but when he was about to be carried off, thinking, I suppose, that I might perhaps be of some service to him, he came and told me that he was Billy, and the old servant of General Washington. He had been left there on account of an indisposition which prevented his attending his master. I asked him a great many questions, as you may suppose; but found very little satisfaction in his answers. At last, however, he told me that he had a small portmanteau of his master's of which, when he found that he must

Letters received at this juncture from Lafayette, gave Washington tidings concerning the expedition against Canada, set on foot without consulting him. General Conway had arrived at Albany three days before the marquis, and his first word when they met was that the expedition was quite impossible. Generals Schuyler, Lincoln, and Arnold, had written to Conway to that effect. The marquis at first was inclined to hope the contrary, but his hope was soon demolished. Instead of the two thousand five hundred men that had been

be put into confinement, he entreated my care. It contained only a few stockings and shirts; and I could see nothing worth my care, except an almanac, in which he had kept a sort of journal, or diary of his proceedings since his first coming to New York; there were also two letters from his lady, one from Mr. Curtis, and some pretty long ones from a Mr. Lund Washington. And in the same bundle with them, the first draughts, or foul copies of answers to them. I read these with avidity; and being highly entertained with them, have shown them to several of my friends, who all agree with me, that he is a very different character from what they had supposed him."

In commenting on the above, Washington observed that his mulatto man Billy, had never been one moment in the power of the enemy, and that no part of his baggage nor any of his attendants were captured during the whole course of the war.—*Letter to Timothy Pickering*, Sparks, ix., 149.

promised him, not twelve hundred in all were to be found fit for duty, and most part of these were "naked even for a summer's campaign;" all shrank from a winter incursion into so cold a country. As to General Stark and his legion of Green Mountain Boys, who, according to the gasconade of Gates, might have burnt the fleet before Lafayette's arrival, the marquis received at Albany a letter from the veteran, "who wishes to know," says he, "*what number of men, for what time, and for what rendezvous, I desire him to raise.*"

Another officer, who was to have enlisted men, would have done so, *had he received money.* "One asks what encouragement his people will have; the other has no clothes; not one of them has received a dollar of what was due to them. I have applied to everybody, I have begged at every door I could, these two days, and I see that I could do something were the expedition to be begun in five weeks. But you know we have not an hour to lose; and, indeed, it is now rather too late had we everything in readiness."

The poor marquis was in despair; but what most distressed him was the dread of ridicule. He had written to his friends that he had the command of the expedition; it would be known throughout Europe. "I am afraid," says he,

"that it will reflect on my reputation, and I shall be laughed at. My fears upon that subject are so strong, that I would choose to become again only a volunteer, unless Congress offers the means of mending this ugly business by some glorious operation."

A subsequent letter is in the same vein. The poor marquis, in his perplexity, lays his whole heart open to Washington with child-like simplicity. "I have written lately to you my distressing, ridiculous, foolish, and indeed nameless situation. I am sent, with a great noise, at the head of an army for doing great things; the whole continent, France and Europe herself, and, what is worse, the British army, are in great expectations. How far they will be deceived, how far we shall be ridiculed, you may judge by the candid account you have got of the state of our affairs.—I confess, my dear general, that I find myself of very quick feelings whenever my reputation and glory are concerned in anything. It is very hard that such a part of my happiness, without which I cannot live, should depend upon schemes which I never knew of but when there was no time to put them in execution. I assure you, my most dear and respected friend, that I am more unhappy than I ever was. . . . I should be very happy if you

were here, to give some advice; but I have nobody to consult with."

Washington, with his considerate, paternal counsels, hastened to calm the perturbation of his youthful friend, and dispel those fears respecting his reputation, excited only, as he observed, "by an uncommon degree of sensibility." "It will be no disadvantage to you to have it known in Europe," writes he, "that you have received so manifest a proof of the good opinion and confidence of Congress as an important detached command. . . . However sensibly your ardor for glory may make you feel this disappointment, you may be assured that your character stands as fair as ever it did, and that no new enterprise is necessary to wipe off this imaginary stain."

The project of an irruption into Canada was at length formally suspended by a resolve of Congress; and Washington was directed to recall the marquis and the Baron de Kalb, the presence of the latter being deemed absolutely necessary to the army at Valley Forge. Lafayette at the same time received assurance of the high sense entertained by Congress of his prudence, activity, and zeal, and that nothing was wanting on his part to give the expedition the utmost possible effect.

Gladly the young marquis hastened back to

Valley Forge, to enjoy the companionship and find himself once more under the paternal eye of Washington, leaving Conway for the time in command at Albany, "where there would be nothing, perhaps, to be attended to but some disputes of Indians and tories."

Washington, in a letter to General Armstrong, writes, "I shall say no more of the Canada expedition than that it is at an end. I never was made acquainted with a single circumstance relating to it." *

* Sparks's *Writings of Washington*, vol. v., p. 300.

Chapter VI.

More Trouble about the Conway Letter—Correspondence between Lord Stirling and Wilkinson—Wilkinson's Honor Wounded—His Passage at Arms with General Gates—His Seat at the Board of War Uncomfortable—Determines that Lord Stirling shall Bleed—His Wounded Honor Healed—His Interview with Washington—Sees the Correspondence of Gates—Denounces Gates and Gives up the Secretaryship—Is Thrown out of Employ—Closing Remarks on the Conway Cabal.

THE Conway letter was destined to be a further source of trouble to the cabal. Lord Stirling, in whose presence, at Reading, Wilkinson had cited the letter, and who had sent information of it to Washington, was now told that Wilkinson, on being questioned by General Conway, had declared that no such words as those reported, nor any to the same effect, were in the letter.

His lordship immediately wrote to Wilkinson, reminding him of the conversation at

Reading, and telling him of what he had recently heard.

"I well know," writes his lordship, "that it is impossible you could have made any such declaration; but it will give great satisfaction to many of your friends to know whether Conway made such inquiry, and what was your answer; they would also be glad to know what were the words of the letter, and I should be very much obliged to you for a copy of it."

Wilkinson found that his tongue had again brought him into difficulty; but he trusted to his rhetoric, rather than his logic, to get him out of it. He wrote in reply, that he perfectly remembered spending a social day with his lordship at Reading, in which the conversation became general, unreserved, and copious; though the tenor of his lordship's discourse, and the nature of their situation, made it confidential. "I cannot, therefore," adds he, logically, "recapitulate particulars, or charge my memory with the circumstances you mention; but, my lord, I disdain low craft, subtlety, and evasion, and will acknowledge it is possible, in the warmth of social intercourse, when the mind is relaxed and the heart is unguarded, that observations may have elapsed which have not since occurred to me. On my

late arrival in camp, Brigadier-General Conway informed me that he had been charged by General Washington with writing a letter to Major-General Gates, which reflected on the general and the army. The particulars of this charge, which Brigadier-General Conway then repeated, I cannot now recollect. I had read the letter alluded to; I did not consider the information conveyed in his Excellency's letter, as expressed by Brigadier-General Conway, to be literal, and well remember replying to that effect in dubious terms. I had no inducement to stain my veracity, were I ever so prone to that infamous vice, as Brigadier Conway informed me he had justified the charge.

"I can scarce credit my senses, when I read the paragraph in which you request an extract from a private letter, which had fallen under my observation. *I have been indiscreet, my lord, but be assured I will not be dishonorable.*"

This communication of Lord Stirling, Wilkinson gives as the first intimation he had received of his being implicated in the disclosure of Conway's letter. When he was subsequently on his way to Yorktown to enter upon his duties as secretary of the Board of War, he learnt at Lancaster that General Gates had denounced him as the betrayer of that

letter, and had spoken of him in the grossest language.

"I was shocked by this information," writes he; "I had sacrificed my lineal rank at General Gates's request; I had served him with zeal and fidelity, of which he possessed the strongest evidence; yet he had condemned me unheard for an act of which I was perfectly innocent, and against which every feeling of my soul revolted with horror. . . . I worshipped honor as the jewel of my soul, and did not pause for the course to be pursued; but I owed it to disparity of years and rank, to former connection and the affections of my own breast, to drain the cup of conciliation and seek an explanation."

The result of these, and other misfortunes, expressed with that grandiloquence on which Wilkinson evidently prided himself, was a letter to Gates, reminding him of the zeal and devotion with which he had uniformly asserted and maintained his cause; "but, sir," adds he, "in spite of every consideration, you have wounded my honor, and must make acknowledgment or satisfaction for the injury.

"In consideration of our past connection, I descend to that explanation with you which I should have denied any other man. The in-

closed letters unmask the villain and evince my innocence. My lord shall bleed for his conduct, but it is proper I first see you."

The letters inclosed were those between him and Lord Stirling, the exposition of which he alleges ought to acquit him of sinister intention, and stamp the report of his lordship to General Washington with palpable falsehood.

Gates writes briefly in reply. "Sir,—The following extract of a letter from General Washington to me will show you how your honor has been called in question; which is all the explanation necessary upon this matter; any other satisfaction you may command."

Then followed the extracts giving the information communicated by Wilkinson to Major McWilliams, Lord Stirling's aide-de-camp.

"After reading the whole of the above extract," adds Gates, "I am astonished, if you really gave Major McWilliams such information, how you could intimate to me that it was *possible* Colonel Troup *had conversed* with Colonel Hamilton upon the subject of General Conway's letter."

According to Wilkinson's story he now proceeded to Yorktown, purposely arriving in the twilight, to escape observation. There he met with an old comrade, Captain Stoddart, re-

counted his wrongs, and requested him to be the bearer of a message to General Gates. Stoddart refused; and warned him that he was running headlong to destruction: "but ruin," observes Wilkinson, "had no terrors for an ardent young man, who prized his honor a thousand fold more than his life, and who was willing to hazard his eternal happiness in its defense."

He accidentally met with another military friend, Lieutenant-Colonel Ball, of the Virginia line, "whose spirit was as independent as his fortune." He willingly became bearer of the following note from Wilkinson to General Gates:

"Sir,—I have discharged my duty to you, and to my conscience; meet me to-morrow morning behind the English church, and I will there stipulate the satisfaction which you have promised to grant," etc.

Colonel Ball was received with complaisance by the general. The meeting was fixed for eight o'clock in the morning, with pistols.

At the appointed time Wilkinson and his second, having put their arms in order, were about to sally forth, when Captain Stoddart made his appearance, and informed Wilkinson that Gates desired to speak with him. Where? —In the street near the door.—"The surprise robbed me of circumspection," continues Wil-

kinson. "I requested Colonel Ball to halt, and followed Captain Stoddart. I found General Gates unarmed and alone, and was received with tenderness but manifest embarrassment: he asked me to walk, turned into a back street, and we proceeded in silence till we passed the buildings, when he burst into tears, took me by the hand, and asked me 'how I could think he wished to injure me?' I was too deeply affected to speak, and he relieved my embarrassment by continuing: '*I* injure you! it is impossible. I should as soon think of injuring my own child.' This language," observes Wilkinson, "not only disarmed me, but awakened all my confidence and all my tenderness. I was silent; and he added, 'Besides, there was no cause for injuring you, as Conway acknowledged his letter, and has since said much harder things to Washington's face.'

"Such language left me nothing to require," continues Wilkinson. "It was satisfactory beyond expectation, and rendered me more than content. I was flattered and pleased; and if a third person had doubted the sincerity of the explanation, I would have insulted him."

A change soon came over the spirit of this maudlin scene. Wilkinson attended as secretary at the War Office. "My reception from the president, General Gates," writes he, "did

not correspond with his recent professions; he was civil, but barely so, and I was at a loss to account for his coldness, yet had no suspicion of his insincerity."

Wilkinson soon found his situation at the Board of War uncomfortable; and after the lapse of a few days set out for Valley Forge. On his way thither he met Washington's old friend, Dr. Craik, and learnt from him that his promotion to the rank of brigadier-general by brevet, had been remonstrated against to Congress by forty-seven colonels. He therefore sent in his resignation, not wishing, he said, to hold it, unless he could wear it to the honor and advantage of his country; "and this conduct," adds he, "however repugnant to fashionable ambition, I find consistent with those principles in which I early drew my sword in the present contest."

At Lancaster, Wilkinson, recollecting his resolve that Lord Stirling "should bleed for his conduct," requested his friend, Colonel Moylan, to deliver a "peremptory message" to his lordship. The colonel considered the measure rather precipitate, and suggested that a suitable acknowledgment from his lordship would be a more satisfactory reparation of the wrong than a sacrifice of the life of either of the parties. "There is not in the whole range of

my friends, acquaintance, and I might add, in the universe," exclaims Wilkinson, "a man of more sublimated sentiment, or who combined with sound discretion a more punctilious sense of honor, than Colonel Moylan." Taking the colonel's advice, therefore, he moderated his peremptory message to the following note:

"My Lord,—The propriety or impropriety of your communicating to his Excellency any circumstance which passed at your lordship's board at Reading, I leave to be determined by your own feelings and the judgment of the public; but as the affair has eventually induced reflections on my integrity, the sacred duty I owe my honor obliges me to request from your lordship's hand, that the conversation which you have published *passed in a private company during a convivial hour.*"

His lordship accordingly gave it under his hand that the words passed under such circumstances, but under no injunction of secrecy. Whereupon Wilkinson's irritable but easily pacified honor was appeased, and his sword slept in its sheath.

At Valley Forge Wilkinson had an interview with Washington, in which the subject of General Conway's letter was discussed, and the whole correspondence between Gates and the commander-in-chief laid before him.

"This exposition," writes Wilkinson, "unfolded to me a scene of perfidy and duplicity of which I had no suspicion." It drew from him the following letter to Washington, dated March 28th: "I beg you to receive the grateful homage of a sensible mind for your condescension in exposing to me General Gates's letters, which unmask his artifices and efforts to ruin me. The authenticity of the information received through Lord Stirling I cannot confirm, as I solemnly assure your Excellency I do not remember the conversation which passed on that occasion, nor can I recollect particular passages of that letter, as I had but a cursory view of it at a late hour. However, I so well remember its general tenor, that, although General Gates has pledged his word it was a wicked and malicious forgery, I will stake my reputation, if the genuine letter is produced, that words to the same effect will appear."

A few days afterwards, Wilkinson addressed the following letter to the President of Congress:

"Sir,—While I make my acknowledgments to Congress, for the appointment of Secretary to the Board of War and Ordnance, I am sorry I should be constrained to resign that office; but, after the acts of *treachery* and *falsehood* in

which I have detected Major-General Gates, the president of that board, it is impossible for me to reconcile it to my honor to serve with him." *

After recording this letter in his memoirs, Wilkinson adds: "I had previously resigned my brevet of brigadier-general, on grounds of patriotism; but I still retained my commission of colonel, which was never to my knowledge revoked; yet the dominant influence of General Gates, and the feuds, and factions, and intrigues which prevailed in Congress and in the army of that day, threw me out of employ." —There we shall leave him; it was a kind of retirement which we apprehend he had richly merited, and we doubt whether his country would have been the loser had he been left to enjoy it for the remainder of his days.

Throughout all the intrigues and manœuvres of the cabal, a part of which we have laid before the reader, Washington had conducted himself with calmness and self-command, speaking on the subject to no one but a very few of his friends; lest a knowledge of those internal dissensions should injure the service.

In a letter to Patrick Henry he gives his closing observations concerning them. "I cannot precisely mark the extent of their

* Wilkinson's *Memoirs*, vol. i., p. 409.

views; but it appeared in general, that General Gates was to be exalted on the ruin of my reputation and influence. This I am authorized to say, from undeniable facts in my own possession, from publications, the evident scope of which could not be mistaken, and from private detractions industriously circulated. General Mifflin, it is commonly supposed, bore the second part in the cabal; and General Conway, I know, was a very active and malignant partisan; but I have good reason to believe that their machinations have recoiled most sensibly upon themselves."

An able and truthful historian, to whose researches we are indebted for most of the documents concerning the cabal, gives it as his opinion that there is not sufficient evidence to prove any concerted plan of action or any fixed design among the leaders: a few aspiring men like Gates and Mifflin, might have flattered themselves with indefinite hopes, and looked forward to a change as promising the best means of aiding their ambitious views; but that it was not probable they had united in any clear or fixed purpose.*

These observations are made with that au-

* Sparks's *Writings of Washington*, vol. v., Appendix—where there is a series of documents respecting the Conway Cabal.

thor's usual candor and judgment; yet, wanting as the intrigues of the cabal might be in plan or fixed design, they were fraught with mischief to the public service, inspiring doubts of its commanders and seeking to provoke them to desperate enterprises. They harassed Washington in the latter part of his campaign, contributed to the dark cloud that hung over his gloomy encampment at Valley Forge, and might have effected his downfall, had he been more irascible in his temper, more at the mercy of impulse, and less firmly fixed in the affections of the people. As it was, they only tended to show wherein lay his surest strength. Jealous rivals he might have in the army, bitter enemies in Congress, but the soldiers loved him, and the large heart of the nation always beat true to him.

NOTE.

The following anecdote of the late Governor Jay, one of our purest and most illustrious statesmen, is furnished to us by his son Judge Jay:

"Shortly before the death of John Adams, I was sitting alone with my father, conversing about the American Revolution. Suddenly he remarked, 'Ah, William! the history of that Revolution will never be known. Nobody now alive knows it but John Adams and myself.' Surprised at such a declaration, I asked him to what he referred? He briefly replied,

'The proceedings of the old Congress.' Again I inquired, 'What proceedings?' He answered, 'Those against Washington; from first to last there was a most bitter party against him.'"

As the old Congress always sat with closed doors, the public knew no more of what passed within than what it was deemed expedient to disclose.

Chapter VII.

Committee of Arrangement—Reforms in the Army—Scarcity in the Camp—The Enemy Revel in Philadelphia—Attempt to Surprise Light-Horse Harry—His Gallant Defense—Praised by Washington—Promoted—Letter from General Lee—Burgoyne Returns to England—Mrs. Washington at Valley Forge—Bryan Fairfax Visits the Camp—Arrival of the Baron Steuben—His Character—Disciplines the Army—Greene Made Quartermaster-General.

DURING the winter's encampment in Valley Forge, Washington sedulously applied himself to the formation of a new system for the army. At his earnest solicitation Congress appointed a committee of five, called the Committee of Arrangement, to repair to the camp and assist him in the task.* Before their arrival he had collected the written opinions and

* Names of the committee—General Reed, Nathaniel Folsom, Francis Dana, Charles Carroll, and Gouverneur Morris.

suggestions of his officers on the subject, and from these, and his own observations and experience, had prepared a document exhibiting the actual state of the army, the defects of previous systems, and the alterations and reforms that were necessary. The committee remained three months with him in camp, and then made a report to Congress founded on his statement. The reforms therein recommended were generally adopted. On one point, however, there was much debate. Washington had urged that the pay of the officers was insufficient for their decent subsistence, especially during the actual depreciation of the currency; and that many resignations were the consequence. He recommended not only that their pay should be increased, but that there should be a provision for their future support, by half pay and a pensionary establishment, so as to secure them from being absolutely impoverished in the service of their country.

This last recommendation had to encounter a great jealousy of the army on the part of Congress, and all that Washington could effect by strenuous and unremitted exertions, was a kind of compromise, according to which officers were to receive half-pay for seven years after the war, and non-commissioned officers and privates eighty dollars each.

The reforms adopted were slow in going into operation. In the meantime, the distresses of the army continued to increase. The surrounding country for a great distance was exhausted, and had the appearance of having been pillaged. In some places where the inhabitants had provisions and cattle they denied it, intending to take them to Philadelphia, where they could obtain greater prices. The undisturbed communication with the city had corrupted the minds of the people in its vicinage. "This State is sick even unto the death," said Gouverneur Morris.

The parties sent out to forage too often returned empty-handed. "For some days past there has been little less than a famine in the camp," writes Washington, on one occasion. "A part of the army has been a week without any kind of flesh, and the rest three or four days. Naked and starving as they are, we cannot enough admire the incomparable patience and fidelity of the soldiery, that they have not been, ere this, excited by their suffering to a general mutiny and desertion."

The committee, in their report, declared that the want of straw had cost the lives of many of the troops. "Unprovided with this, or materials to raise them from the cold and wet earth, sickness and mortality have spread

through their quarters in an astonishing degree. Nothing can equal their sufferings, except the patience and fortitude with which the faithful part of the army endure them." A British historian cites as a proof of the great ascendency of Washington over his "raw and undisciplined troops," that so many remained with him throughout the winter, in this wretched situation and still more wretched plight; almost naked, often on short allowance, with great sickness and mortality, and a scarcity of medicines, their horses perishing by hundreds from hunger and the severity of the season.

He gives a striking picture of the indolence and luxury which reigned at the same time in the British army in Philadelphia. It is true, the investment of the city by the Americans rendered provisions dear and fuel scanty; but the consequent privations were felt by the inhabitants, not by invaders. The latter revelled as if in a conquered place. Private houses were occupied without rendering compensation; the officers were quartered on the principal inhabitants, many of whom were of the Society of "Friends;" some even transgressed so far against propriety as to introduce their mistresses into the quarters thus oppressively obtained. The quiet habits of the city were outraged by the dissolute habits of a camp. Gaming

prevailed to a shameless degree. A foreign officer kept a faro bank, at which he made a fortune, and some of the young officers ruined themselves.

"During the whole of this long winter of riot and dissipation," continues the same writer, "Washington was suffered to remain undisturbed at Valley Forge, with an army not exceeding five thousand effective men, and his cannon frozen up and immovable. A nocturnal attack might have forced him to a disadvantageous action or compelled him to a disastrous retreat, leaving behind him his sick, cannon, ammunition, and heavy baggage. It might have opened the way for supplies to the city, and shaken off the lethargy of the British army. In a word," adds he, "had General Howe led on his troops to action, victory was in his power and conquest in his train." *

Without assenting to the probability of such a result, it is certain that the army for a part of the winter, while it held Philadelphia in siege, was in as perilous a situation as that which kept a bold front before Boston, without ammunition to serve its cannon.

On one occasion there was a flurry at the most advanced post, where Captain Henry Lee (Light-Horse Harry) with a few of his troops

* Stedman.

was stationed. He made himself formidable to the enemy by harassing their foraging parties. An attempt was made to surprise him. A party of about two hundred dragoons, taking a circuitous route in the night, came upon him by day-break. He had but a few men with him at the time, and took post in a large store-house. His scanty force did not allow a soldier for each window. The dragoons attempted to force their way into the house. There was a warm contest. The dragoons were bravely repulsed, and sheered off, leaving two killed and four wounded. "So well directed was the opposition," writes Lee to Washington, "that we drove them from the stables, and saved every horse. We have got the arms, some cloaks, etc., of their wounded. The enterprise was certainly daring, though the issue of it very ignominious. I had not a soldier for each window."

Washington, whose heart evidently warmed more and more to this young Virginian officer, the son of his "lowland beauty," not content with noticing his exploit in general orders, wrote a note to him on the subject, expressed with unusual familiarity and warmth. "My dear Lee," writes he, "although I have given you my thanks in the general orders of the day, for the late instance of your gallant behavior,

I cannot resist the inclination I feel to repeat them again in this manner. I needed no fresh proof of your merit to bear you in remembrance. I waited only for the proper time and season to show it; those I hope are not far off. . . . Offer my sincere thanks to the whole of your gallant party, and assure them, that no one felt pleasure more sensibly, or rejoiced more sincerely for your and their escape, than your affectionate," etc.

In effect, Washington not long afterwards strongly recommended Lee for the command of two troops of horse, with the rank of major, to act as an independent partisan corps. "His genius," observes he, "particularly adapts him to a command of this nature; and it will be the most agreeable to him of any station in which he could be placed."

It was a high gratification to Washington when Congress made this appointment; accompanying it with encomiums on Lee as a brave and prudent officer, who had rendered essential service to the country, and acquired distinguished honor to himself and the corps he commanded.

About the time that Washington was gladdened by the gallantry and good fortune of "Light-Horse Harry," he received a letter from another Lee, the captive general, still in

the hands of the enemy. It had been written nearly a month previously. "I have the strongest reason to flatter myself," writes Lee, "that you will interest yourself in whatever interests my comfort and welfare. I think it my duty to inform you that my situation is much bettered. It is now five days that I am on my parole. I have the full liberty of the city and its limits; have horses at my command furnished by Sir Henry Clinton and General Robertson; am lodged with two of the oldest and warmest friends I have in the world, Colonel Butler and Colonel Disney of the forty-second regiment. In short, my situation is rendered as easy, comfortable and pleasant as possible, for a man who is in any sort a prisoner."

Washington in reply expressed his satisfaction at learning that he was released from confinement, and permitted so many indulgences. "You may rest assured," adds he, "that I feel myself very much interested in your welfare, and that every exertion has been used on my part to effect your exchange. This I have not been able to accomplish. However, from the letters which have lately passed between Sir William Howe and myself, upon the subject of prisoners, I am authorized to expect that you will return in a few days to your

friends on parole, as Major-General Prescott will be sent in on the same terms for that purpose."

Difficulties, however, still occurred; and General Lee and Colonel Ethan Allen were doomed for a few months longer to suffer the annoyance of hope deferred.

The embarkation of General Burgoyne and his troops from Boston, became also a subject of difficulty and delay; it being alleged that some stipulations of the treaty of surrender had not been complied with. After some correspondence, and discussion, it was resolved in Congress that the embarkation should be suspended, until a distinct and explicit ratification of the convention should be properly notified to that body by the court of Great Britain. Burgoyne subsequently obtained permission for his own return to England on parole, on account of ill health.

In the month of February, Mrs. Washington rejoined the general at Valley Forge, and took up her residence at headquarters. The arrangements consequent to her arrival bespeak the simplicity of style in this rude encampment. "The general's apartment is very small," writes she to a friend; "he has had a log cabin built to dine in, which has made our quarters much more tolerable than they were at first."

Lady Stirling, Mrs. Knox, the wife of the

general, and the wives of other of the officers were also in camp. The reforms in the commissariat had begun to operate. Provisions arrived in considerable quantities; supplies, on their way to the Philadelphia market to load the British tables, were intercepted and diverted into the hungry camp of the patriots; magazines were formed in Valley Forge; the threatened famine was averted; "grim-visaged war" gradually relaxed his features, and affairs in the encampment began to assume a more cheering aspect.

In the latter part of the winter, Washington was agreeably surprised by a visit from his old and highly esteemed friend, Bryan Fairfax. That gentleman, although he disapproved of the measures of the British government which had severed the colonies from the mother country, was still firm in allegiance to his king. This had rendered his situation uncomfortable among his former intimates, who were generally embarked in the Revolution. He had resolved, therefore, to go to England, and remain there until the peace. Washington, who knew his integrity and respected his conscientiousness, received him with the warm cordiality of former and happier days; for indeed he brought with him recollections always dear to his heart, of Mount Vernon, and Bel-

voir, and Virginia life, and the pleasant banks of the Potomac. As Mr. Fairfax intended to embark at New York, Washington furnished him with a passport to that city. Being arrived there, the conscience of Mr. Fairfax prevented him from taking the oaths prescribed, which he feared might sever him from his wife and children, and he obtained permission from the British commander to return to them. On his way home he revisited Washington, and the kindness he again experienced from him, so different from the harshness with which others had treated him, drew from him a grateful letter of acknowledgment after he had arrived in Virginia.

"There are times," said he, "when favors conferred make a greater impression than at others, for, though I have received many, I hope I have not been unmindful of them; yet, that at a time your popularity was at the highest and mine at the lowest, and when it is so common for men's resentments to run high against those who differ from them in opinion, you should act with your wonted kindness towards me, has affected me more than any favor I have received; and could not be believed by some in New York, it being above the run of common minds." *

* Bryan Fairfax continued to reside in Virginia un-

Washington, in reply, expressed himself gratified by the sentiments of his letter and confident of his sincerity. "The friendship," added he, "which I ever professed and felt for you, met with no diminution from the difference in our political sentiments. I know the rectitude of my own intentions, and believing in the sincerity of yours, lamented, though I did not condemn, your renunciation of the creed I had adopted. Nor do I think any person or power ought to do it, whilst your conduct is not opposed to the general interest of the people and the measures they are pursuing; the latter, that is our actions, depending upon ourselves, may be controlled; while the powers of thinking, originating in higher causes, cannot always be moulded to our wishes."

The most important arrival in the camp was that of the Baron Steuben, towards the latter part of February. He was a seasoned soldier from the old battle-fields of Europe; having served in the seven years' war, been aide-de-camp to the great Frederick, and connected with the

til his death, which happened in 1802, at seventy-five years of age. He became proprietor of Belvoir and heir to the family title, but the latter he never assumed. During the latter years of his life he was a clergyman of the Episcopal church.

quartermaster-general's department. Honors had been heaped upon him in Germany. After leaving the Prussian army he had been grand marshal of the court of the Prince of Hohenzollern-Hechingen, colonel in the circle of Suabia, lieutenant-general under the Prince Margrave of Baden, and knight of the Order of Fidelity; and he had declined liberal offers from the King of Sardinia and the Emperor of Austria. With an income of about three thousand dollars, chiefly arising from various appointments, he was living pleasantly in distinguished society at the German courts, and making occasional visits to Paris, when he was persuaded by the Count de St. Germain, French Minister of War, and others of the French cabinet, to come out to America, and engage in the cause they were preparing to defend. Their object was to secure for the American armies the services of an officer of experience and a thorough disciplinarian. Through their persuasions he resigned his several offices, and came out at forty-eight years of age, a soldier of fortune, to the rude fighting grounds of America, to aid a half-disciplined people in their struggle for liberty. No certainty of remuneration was held out to him, but there was an opportunity for acquiring military glory; the probability of adequate reward

should the young republic be successful; and it was hinted that, at all events, the French court would not suffer him to be a loser. As his means, on resigning his offices, were small, Beaumarchais furnished funds for his immediate expenses.

The baron had brought strong letters from Dr. Franklin and Mr. Deane, our envoys at Paris, and from the Count St. Germain. Landing at Portsmouth in New Hampshire, December 1st, he had forwarded copies of his letters to Washington. "The object of my greatest ambition," writes he, "is to render your country all the service in my power, and to deserve the title of a citizen of America by fighting for the cause of your liberty. If the distinguished ranks in which I have served in Europe should be an obstacle, I had rather serve under your Excellency as a volunteer, than to be an object of discontent among such deserving officers as have already distinguished themselves among you."

"I would say, moreover," adds he, "were it not for the fear of offending your modesty, that your Excellency is the only person under whom, after having served under the king of Prussia, I could wish to pursue an art to which I have wholly given myself up."

By Washington's direction, the baron had

proceeded direct to Congress. His letters procured him a distinguished reception from the president. A committee was appointed to confer with him. He offered his services as a volunteer: making no condition for rank or pay, but trusting, should he prove himself worthy and the cause be crowned with success, he would be indemnified for the sacrifices he had made, and receive such further compensation as he might be thought to merit.

The committee having made their report, the baron's proffered services were accepted with a vote of thanks for his disinterestedness, and he was ordered to join the army at Valley Forge. That army in its ragged condition and squalid quarters, presented a sorry aspect to a strict disciplinarian from Germany, accustomed to the order and appointments of European camps; and the baron often declared, that under such circumstances no army in Europe could be kept together for a single month. The liberal mind of Steuben, however, made every allowance; and Washington soon found in him a consummate soldier, free from pedantry or pretension.

The evils arising from a want of uniformity in discipline and manœuvres throughout the army, had long caused Washington to desire a well-organized inspectorship. He knew that

the same desire was felt by Congress. Conway had been appointed to that office, but had never entered upon its duties. The baron appeared to be peculiarly well qualified for such a department; Washington determined, therefore, to set on foot a temporary institution of the kind. Accordingly he proposed to the baron to undertake the office of inspector-general. The latter cheerfully agreed. Two ranks of inspectors were appointed under him; the lowest to inspect brigades, the highest to superintend several of these. Among the inspectors was a French gentleman of the name of Ternant, chosen not only for his intrinsic merit and abilities, but on account of his being well versed in the English as well as the French language, which made him a necessary assistant to the baron, who, at times, needed an interpreter. The gallant Fleury, to whom Congress had given the rank and pay of lieutenant-colonel, and who had exercised the office of aide-major in France, was soon after employed likewise as an inspector.*

In a little while the whole army was under drill; for a great part, made up of raw militia, scarcely knew the manual exercise. Many of the officers, too, knew little of manœuvring,

* Washington to the President of Cong. Sparks, v., 347.

and the best of them had much to learn. The baron furnished his sub-inspectors with written instructions relative to their several functions. He took a company of soldiers under his immediate training, and after he had sufficiently schooled it, made it a model for the others, exhibiting the manœuvres they had to practise.

It was a severe task at first for the aide-de-camp of the great Frederick to operate upon such raw materials. His ignorance of the language, too, increased the difficulty, where manœuvres were to be explained or rectified. He was in despair, until an officer of a New York regiment, Captain Walker, who spoke French, stepped forward and offered to act as interpreter. "Had I seen an angel from Heaven," says the baron, "I could not have been more rejoiced." He made Walker his aide-de-camp, and from that time had him always at hand.

For a time, there was nothing but drills throughout the camp, then gradually came evolutions of every kind. The officers were schooled as well as the men. The troops, says a person who was present in the camp, were paraded in a single line with shouldered arms; every officer in his place. The baron passed in front, then took the musket of

each soldier in hand, to see whether it was clean and well polished, and examined whether the men's accoutrements were in good order.

He was sadly worried for a time with the militia; especially when any manœuvre was to be performed. The men blundered in their exercise; the baron blundered in his English; his French and German were of no avail; he lost his temper, which was rather warm; swore in all three languages at once, which made the matter worse, and at length called his aide to his assistance; to help him curse the blockheads, as it was pretended—but no doubt to explain the manœuvre.*

Still the grand marshal of the court of Hohenzollern mingled with the veteran soldier of Frederick, and tempered his occasional bursts of impatience; and he had a kind, generous heart, that soon made him a favorite with the men. His discipline extended to their comforts. He inquired into their treatment by the officers. He examined the doctor's re-

* On one occasion having exhausted all his German and French oaths, he vociferated to his aide-de-camp, Major Walker, "Vien mon ami Walker—vien mon bon ami. Sacra— G— dam de gaucherie of dese badauts—je ne puis plus—I can curse dem no more."—*Carden, Anecdotes of the Am. War*, p. 341.

ports; visited the sick; and saw that they were well lodged and attended.

He was an example, too, of the regularity and system he exacted. One of the most alert and indefatigable men in the camp; up at daybreak if not before, whenever there were to be any important manœuvres, he took his cup of coffee and smoked his pipe while his servant dressed his hair, and by sunrise he was in the saddle, equipped at all points, with the star of his order of knighthood glittering on his breast, and was off to the parade, alone, if his suite were not ready to attend him.

The strong good sense of the baron was evinced in the manner in which he adapted his tactics to the nature of the army and the situation of the country, instead of adhering with bigotry to the systems of Europe. His instructions were appreciated by all. The officers received them gladly and conformed to them. The men soon became active and adroit. The army gradually acquired a proper organization, and began to operate like a great machine; and Washington found in the baron an intelligent, disinterested, truthful coadjutor, well worthy of the badge he wore as a knight of the Order of *Fidelity*.

Another great satisfaction to Washington, was the appointment by Congress (March 3d)

of Greene to the office of quartermaster-general; still retaining his rank of major-general in the army. The confusion and derangement of this department during the late campaign, while filled by General Mifflin, had been a source of perpetual embarrassment. That officer, however capable of doing his duty, was hardly ever at hand. The line and the staff were consequently at variance; and the country was plundered in a way sufficient to breed a civil war between the staff and the inhabitants. Washington was often obliged to do the duties of the office himself, until he declared to the Committee of Congress that "he would stand quartermaster no longer." * Greene undertook the office with reluctance, and agreed to perform the military duties of it without compensation for the space of a year. He found it in great disorder and confusion, but, by extraordinary exertions and excellent system, so arranged it, as to put the army in a condition to take the field and move with rapidity the moment it should be required, † The favor in which Greene stood with the commander-in-chief, was a continual cause of mean jealousy and cavil among the intriguing and the envious;

* *Correspondence of the Revolution*, vol. ii., p. 274.

† Washington to Greene.—*Writings of Washington*, vol. vii., p. 152.

but it arose from the abundant proofs Washington had received in times of trial and difficulty, that he had a brave, affectionate heart, a sound head, and an efficient arm, on all of which he could thoroughly rely.

Chapter VIII.

Fortifications of the Hudson—Project to Surprise Sir Henry Clinton—General Howe Forages the Jerseys—Ships and Stores Burnt at Bordentown—Plans for the next Campaign—Gates and Mifflin under Washington's Command—Downfall of Conway—Lord North's Conciliatory Bills—Sent to Washington by Governor Tryon—Resolves of Congress—Letter of Washington to Tryon—Rejoicing at Valley Forge—The Mischianza.

THE Highlands of the Hudson had been carefully reconnoitered in the course of the winter by General Putnam, Governor Clinton, his brother James, and several others, and subsequently by a committee from the New York Legislature, to determine upon the most eligible place to be fortified. West Point was ultimately chosen; and Putnam was urged by Washington to have the works finished as soon as possible. The general being called to Connecticut by his private affairs, and being involved in an in-

quiry to be made into the loss of Forts Montgomery and Clinton, Major-General McDougall was ordered to the Highlands, to take command of the different posts in that department, and to press forward the construction of the works, in which he was to be assisted by Kosciuszko as engineer.

Before General McDougall's arrival, Brigadier-General Parsons had command at West Point. A letter of Washington to the latter suggests an enterprise of a somewhat romantic character. It was no less than to pounce upon Sir Henry Clinton, and carry him off prisoner from his headquarters in the city of New York. The general was quartered in the Kennedy house near the battery, but a short distance from the Hudson. His situation was rather lonely; most of the houses in that quarter having been consumed in the great fire. A retired way led from it through a back yard or garden to the river bank, where Greenwich street extends at present. The idea of Washington was, that an enterprising party should embark in eight or ten whale-boats at King's Ferry, just below the Highlands, on the first of the ebb, and early in the evening. In six or eight hours, with change of hands, the boats might be rowed under the shadows of the western shore, and approach New York with

muffled oars. There were no ships of war at that time on that side of the city; all were in the East River. The officers and men to be employed in the enterprise were to be dressed in red, and much in the style of the British soldiery. Having captured Sir Henry, they might return in their swift whale-boats with the flood tide, or a party of horse might meet them at Fort Lee. "What guards may be at or near his quarters, I cannot say with precision," writes Washington, "and therefore shall not add anything on this score. But I think it one of the most practicable, and surely it will be among the most desirable and honorable things imaginable to take him prisoner."

The enterprise, we believe, was never attempted. Colonel Hamilton is said to have paralyzed it. He agreed with Washington that there could be little doubt of its success; "but, sir," said he, "have you examined the consequences of it?" "In what respect?" asked the general. "Why," replied Hamilton, "we shall rather lose than gain by removing Sir Henry from the command of the British army, because we perfectly understand his character; and by taking him off we only make way for some other, perhaps an abler officer, whose character and dispositions we have to learn." The shrewd suggestions of

his aide-de-camp had their effect on Washington, and the project to abduct Sir Henry was abandoned. *

The spring opened without any material alteration in the dispositions of the armies. Washington at one time expected an attack upon his camp ; but Sir William was deficient in the necessary enterprise ; he contented himself with sending out parties which foraged the surrounding country for many miles, and scoured part of the Jerseys, bringing in considerable supplies. These forays were in some instances accompanied by wanton excesses and needless bloodshed ; the more unjustifiable, as they met with feeble resistance, especially in the Jerseys, where it was difficult to assemble militia in sufficient force to oppose them.

Another ravaging party ascended the Delaware in flat-bottomed boats and galleys ; set fire to public storehouses in Bordentown containing provisions and munitions of war ; burnt two frigates, several privateers, and a number of vessels of various classes, some of them laden with military stores. Had the armed vessels been sunk, according to the earnest advice of Washington, the greater part of them might have been saved.

A circular letter was sent by Washington on

* Wilkinson's *Memoirs*, vol. i., p. 852.

the 20th to all the general officers in camp, requesting their opinions in writing, which of three plans to adopt for the next campaign: to attempt the recovery of Philadelphia; to transfer the war to the north and make an attempt on New York; or to remain quiet in a secure and fortified camp, disciplining and arranging the army until the enemy should begin their operations; then to be governed by circumstances.

Just after the issue of this circular, intelligence received from Congress showed that the ascendency of the cabal was at an end. By a resolution of that body on the 15th, Gates was directed to resume the command of the Northern department, and to proceed forthwith to Fishkill for that purpose. He was invested with powers for completing the works on the Hudson, and authorized to carry on operations against the enemy should any favorable opportunity offer, for which purposes he might call for the artificers and militia of New York and the Eastern States: but he was not to undertake any expedition against New York without previously consulting the commander-in-chief. Washington was requested to assemble a council of major-generals to determine upon a plan of operations, and Gates and Mifflin, by a subsequent resolution, were ordered to attend that council. This arrangement, put-

ting Gates under Washington's order, evinced the determination of Congress to sustain the latter in his proper authority.

Washington, in a reply to the President of Congress, who had informed him of this arrangement, mentioned the circular he had just issued. "There is not a moment to be delayed," observed he, "in forming some general system, and I only await the arrival of Generals Gates and Mifflin to summon a council for the purpose. The next day (24th) he addressed a letter to Gates, requesting him, should he not find it inconvenient, to favor him with a call at the camp, to discuss the plan of operations for the campaign. A similiar invitation was sent by him to Mifflin; who eventually resumed his station in the line.

And here we may note the downfall of the intriguing individual who had given his name to the now extinguished cabal. Conway, after the departure of Lafayette and De Kalb from Albany, had remained but a short time in the command there, being ordered to join the army under General McDougall, stationed at Fishkill. Thence he was soon ordered back to Albany, whereupon he wrote an impertinent letter to the President of Congress, complaining that he was "boxed about in a most indecent manner."

"What is the meaning," demanded he, "of removing me from the scene of action on the opening of the campaign? I did not deserve this burlesque disgrace, and my honor will not permit me to bear it." In a word, he intimated a wish that the president would make his resignation acceptable to Congress.

To his surprise and consternation, his resignation was immediately accepted. He instantly wrote to the president, declaring that his meaning had been misapprehended; and accounted for it by some orthographical or grammatical faults in his letter, being an Irishman, who had learnt his English in France. "I had no thoughts of resigning," adds he, "while there was a prospect of firing a single shot, and especially at the beginning of a campaign which in my opinion will be a very hot one."

All his efforts to get reinstated were unavailing, though he went to Yorktown to make them in person.* "Conway's appointment to the inspectorship of the army, with the rank of

*NOTE.—As General Conway takes no further part in the events of this history, we shall briefly dispose of him. Disappointed in his aims, he became irritable in his temper, and offensive in his manners, and frequently indulged in acrimonious language respecting the commander-in-chief, that was highly resented by

major-general, after he had insulted the commander-in-chief," observes Wilkinson, "was a splenetic measure of a majority of Congress, as factious as it was ill-judged."

They had become heartily ashamed of it; especially as it had proved universally unpopular. The office of inspector-general with the

the army. In consequence of some dispute he became involved in a duel with General John Cadwalader, in which he was severely wounded. Thinking his end was approaching, he addressed the following penitential letter to Washington.

PHILADELPHIA, 23*d July*, 1778.

SIR,—I find myself just able to hold the pen during a few minutes, and take this opportunity of expressing my sincere grief for having done, written, or said anything disagreeable to your Excellency. My career will soon be over, therefore justice and truth prompt me to declare my last sentiments. You are in my eyes the great and good man. May you long enjoy the love, veneration, and esteem of these States, whose liberties you have asserted by your virtues.

I am, with the greatest respect, etc.,

THOMAS CONWAY.

Contrary to all expectation, he recovered from his wound; but, finding himself without rank in the army, covered with public opprobrium, and his very name become a byword, he abandoned a country in which he had dishonored himself, and embarked for France in the course of the year.

rank of major-general, with the proper pay and appointments, were, at Washington's recommendation, voted by them on the 6th of May to Baron Steuben, who had already performed the duties in so satisfactory a manner.

The capture of Burgoyne and his army was now operating with powerful effect on the cabinets of both England and France. With the former it was coupled with the apprehension that France was about to espouse the American cause. The consequence was Lord North's "Conciliatory Bills," as they were called, submitted by him to Parliament, and passed with but slight opposition. One of these bills regulated taxation in the American colonies, in a manner which, it was trusted, would obviate every objection. The other authorized the appointment of commissioners clothed with powers to negotiate with the existing governments ; to proclaim a cessation of hostilities ; to grant pardons, and to adopt other measures of a conciliatory nature.

"If what was now proposed was a right measure," observes a British historian, "it ought to have been adopted at first, and before the sword was drawn ; on the other hand, if the claims of the mother country over her colonies were originally worth contending for,

the strength and resources of the nation were not yet so far exhausted as to justify ministers in relinquishing them without a further struggle." *

Intelligence that a treaty between France and the United States had actually been concluded at Paris, induced the British minister to hurry off a draft of the bills to America, to forestall the effects of the treaty upon the public mind. General Tryon caused copies of it to be printed in New York and circulated through the country. He sent several of them to General Washington, 15th April, with a request that they should be communicated to the officers and privates in his army. Washington felt the singular impertinence of the request. He transmitted them to Congress, observing that the time to entertain such overtures was past. "Nothing short of independence, it appears to me, can possibly do. A peace on other terms would, if I may be allowed the expression, be a peace of war. The injuries we have received from the British nation were so unprovoked, and have been so great and so many, that they can never be forgotten." These and other objections advanced by him met with the concurrence of Congress, and it was unanimously resolved that no conference

* Stedman.

could be held, no treaty made with any commissioners on the part of Great Britain, until that power should have withdrawn its fleets and armies, or acknowledged in positive and express terms the independence of the United States.

On the following day, April 23d, a resolution was passed recommending to the different States to pardon, under such restrictions as might be deemed expedient, such of their citizens as, having levied war against the United States, should return to their allegiance before the 16th of June. Copies of this resolution were struck off in English and German, and inclosed by Washington in a letter to General Tryon, in which he indulged in a vein of grave irony.

"SIR,—Your letter of the 17th and a triplicate of the same were duly received. I had the pleasure of seeing the drafts of the two bills, before those which were sent by you came to hand; and I can assure you they were suffered to have a free currency among the officers and men under my command, in whose fidelity to the United States I have the most perfect confidence. The inclosed *Gazette*, published the 24th at Yorktown, will show you that it is the wish of Congress that they should have an unrestrained circulation.*

* In the *Gazette* of that date the Conciliatory Bills

"I take the liberty to transmit to you a few printed copies of a resolution of Congress of the 23d instant, and to request that you will be instrumental in communicating its contents, so far as it may be in your power, to the persons who are the objects of its operations. The benevolent purpose it is intended to answer will, I persuade myself, sufficiently recommend it to your candor. I am, Sir," etc.

The tidings of the capitulation of Burgoyne had been equally efficacious in quickening the action of the French cabinet. The negotiations, which had gone on so slowly as almost to reduce our commissioners to despair, were brought to a happy termination, and on the 2d of May, ten days after the passing by Congress of the resolves just cited, a messenger arrived express from France with two treaties, one of amity and commerce, the other of defensive alliance, signed in Paris on the 6th of February by M. Girard on the part of France, and by Benjamin Franklin, Silas Deane, and Arthur Lee on the part of the United States. This last treaty stipulated that, should war

were published by order of Congress; as an instance of their reception by the public, we may mention that in Rhode Island the populace burned them under the gallows.

ensue between France and England, it should be made a common cause by the contracting parties, in which neither should make truce or peace with Great Britain without the consent of the other, nor either lay down their arms until the independence of the United States was established.

These treaties were unanimously ratified by Congress, and their promulgation was celebrated by public rejoicings throughout the country. The 6th of May was set apart for a military fête at the camp at Valley Forge. The army was assembled in best array; there was solemn thanksgiving by the chaplains at the head of each brigade; after which a grand parade, a national discharge of thirteen guns, a general *feu de joie*, and shouts of the whole army, "Long live the King of France—Long live the friendly European Powers—Huzza for the American States." A banquet succeeded, at which Washington dined in public with all the officers of his army, attended by a band of music. Patriotic toasts were given and heartily cheered. "I never was present," writes a spectator, "where there was such unfeigned and perfect joy as was discovered in every countenance. Washington retired at five o'clock, on which there was universal huzzaing and clapping of hands—'Long live General Wash-

ington.' The non-commissioned officers and privates followed the example of their officers as he rode past their brigades. The shouts continued till he had proceeded a quarter of a mile, and a thousand hats were tossed in the air. Washington and his suite turned round several times and cheered in reply." Gates and Mifflin, if in the camp at the time, must have seen enough to convince them that the commander-in-chief was supreme in the affections of the army.

On the 8th, the council of war, ordered by Congress, was convened, at which were present Major-Generals Gates, Greene, Stirling, Mifflin, Lafayette, De Kalb, Armstrong, and Steuben, and Brigadier-Generals Knox and Duportail. After the state of the forces, British and American, their number and distribution, had been laid before the council by the commander-in-chief, and a full discussion had been held, it was unanimously determined to remain on the defensive, and not attempt any offensive operation until some opportunity should occur to strike a successful blow. General Lee was not present at the council, but afterward signed the decision.

While the Conciliatory Bills failed thus signally of their anticipated effect upon the Congress and people of the United States, they

were regarded with indignation by the royal forces in America, as offering a humiliating contrast to the high and arrogant tone hitherto indulged towards the "rebels." They struck dismay, too, into the hearts of the American royalists and refugees, who beheld in them sure prognostics of triumph to the cause they had opposed, and of mortification and trouble, if not of exile, to themselves.

The military career of Sir William Howe in the United States was now drawing to a close. His conduct of the war had given much dissatisfaction in England. His enemies observed that everything gained by the troops was lost by the general; that he had suffered an enemy with less than four thousand men to reconquer a province which he had recently reduced, and lay a kind of siege to his army in their winter-quarters;* and that he had brought a sad reverse upon the British arms by failing to co-operate vigorously and efficiently with Burgoyne.

Sir William, on his part, had considered himself slighted by the ministry; his suggestions, he said, were disregarded, and the reinforcements withheld which he considered indispensable for the successful conduct of the war. He had therefore tendered his resigna-

* Stedman, vol. i., p. 84.

tion, which had been promptly accepted, and Sir Henry Clinton ordered to relieve him. Clinton arrived in Philadelphia on the 8th of May, and took command of the army on the 11th.

Sir William Howe was popular among the officers of his army, from his open and engaging manners, and, perhaps, from the loose rule which indulged them in their social excesses. A number of them combined to close his inglorious residence in Philadelphia by a still more inglorious pageant. It was called the MISCHIANZA (or Medley), a kind of regatta and tournament; the former on the Delaware, the latter at a country-seat on its banks.

The regatta was in three divisions, each with its band of music, to which the oarsmen kept time.

The river was crowded with boats, which were kept at a distance from the squadrons of gayly decorated barges, and the houses, balconies, and wharves along the shore were filled with spectators.

We forbear to give the fulsome descriptions of the land part of the Mischianza furnished by various pens; and will content ourselves with the following, from the pen of a British writer who was present. It illustrates sufficiently the absurdity of the scene.

"All the colors of the army were placed in a grand avenue three hundred feet in length, lined with the king's troops, between two triumphal arches, for the two brothers, the Admiral Lord Howe and the General Sir William Howe, to march along in pompous procession, followed by a numerous train of attendants, with seven silken Knights of the Blended Rose, and seven more of the Burning Mountain, and fourteen damsels dressed in the Turkish fashion, to an area of one hundred and fifty yards square, lined also with the king's troops, for the exhibition of a tilt and tournament, or mock fight of old chivalry, in honor of those two heroes. On the top of each triumphal arch was a figure of Fame bespangled with stars, blowing from her trumpet, in letters of light, *Tes lauriers sont immortels* (Thy laurels are immortal)." On this occasion, according to the same writer, "men compared the importance of Sir William's services with the merit he assumed, and the gravity with which he sustained the most excessive praise and adulation."

The unfortunate Major André at that time a captain, was very efficient in getting up this tawdry and somewhat effeminate pageant. He had promoted private theatricals during the winter, and aided in painting scenery and

devising decorations. He wrote a glowing description of the Mischianza, in a letter to a friend, pronouncing it as perhaps the most splendid entertainment ever given by any army to their general. He figured in it as one of the Knights of the Blended Rose. In a letter written to a lady, in the following year, he alludes to his preparations for it as having made him a complete milliner, and offers his services to furnish her supplies in that department.

At the time of this silken and mock heroic display, the number of British chivalry in Philadelphia was nineteen thousand five hundred and thirty, cooped up in a manner by an American force at Valley Forge, amounting, according to official returns to eleven thousand eight hundred men. Could any triumphant pageant be more ill-placed and ill-timed!

Chapter IX.

Lafayette Detached to Keep Watch on Philadelphia—His Position at Barren Hill—Plan of Sir Henry to Entrap him—Washington Alarmed for his Safety—Stratagem of the Marquis—Exchange of General Lee and Colonel Ethan Allen—Allen at Valley Forge—Washington's Opinion of him—Preparations in Philadelphia to Evacuate—Washington's Measures in Consequence—Arrival of Commissioners from England—Their Disappointment—Their Proceedings—Their Failure—Their Manifesto.

SOON after Sir Henry Clinton had taken the command, there were symptoms of an intention to evacuate Philadelphia. Whither the enemy would thence direct their course was a matter of mere conjecture. Lafayette was therefore detached by Washington, with twenty-one hundred chosen men and five pieces of cannon, to take a position nearer the city, where he might be at hand to gain information, watch the movements of the enemy, check their predatory excursions, and

fall on their rear when in the act of withdrawing.

The marquis crossed the Schuylkill on the 18th of May, and proceeded to Barren Hill, about half way between Washington's camp and Philadelphia, and about eleven miles from both. Here he planted his cannon facing the south, with rocky ridges bordering the Schuylkill on his right; woods and stone houses on his left. Behind him the roads forked, one branch leading to Matson's Ford of the Schuylkill, the other by Swedes' Ford to Valley Forge. In advance of his left wing was McLane's company and about fifty Indians. Pickets and videttes were placed in the woods to the south, through which the roads led to Philadelphia, and a body of six hundred Pennsylvania militia were stationed to keep watch on the roads leading to White Marsh.

In the meantime Sir Henry Clinton, having received intelligence through his spies of this movement of Lafayette, concerted a plan to entrap the young French nobleman. Five thousand men were sent out at night, under General Grant, to make a circuitous march by White Marsh, and get in the rear of the Americans; another force under General Grey was to cross to the west side of the Schuylkill, and take post below Barren Hill, while Sir Henry

in person was to lead a third division along the Philadelphia road.

The plan came near being completely successful, through the remissness of the Pennsylvania militia, who had left their post of observation. Early in the morning, as Lafayette was conversing with a young girl, who was to go to Philadelphia and collect information, under pretext of visiting her relatives, word was brought that red-coats had been descried in the woods near White Marsh. Lafayette was expecting a troop of American dragoons in that quarter, who wore scarlet uniforms, and supposed these to be them; to be certain, however, he sent out an officer to reconnoiter. The latter soon came spurring back at full speed. A column of the enemy had pushed forward on the road from White Marsh, were within a mile of the camp, and had possession of the road leading to Valley Forge. Another column was advancing on the Philadelphia road. In fact, the young French general was on the point of being surrounded by a greatly superior force.

Lafayette saw his danger, but maintained his presence of mind. Throwing out small parties of troops to show themselves at various points of the intervening wood, as if an attack on Grant was meditated, he brought that general to a halt, to prepare for action, while he

with his main body pushed forward for Matson's Ford on the Schuylkill.

The alarm-guns at sunrise had apprised Washington that the detachment under Lafayette was in danger. The troops at Valley Forge were instantly under arms. Washington, with his aides-de-camp and some of his general officers, galloped to the summit of a hill, and anxiously reconnoitered the scene of action with a glass. His solicitude for the marquis was soon relieved. The stratagem of the youthful warrior had been crowned with success. He completely gained the march upon General Grant, reached Matson's Ford in safety, crossed it in great order, and took a strong position on high grounds which commanded it. The enemy arrived at the river just in time for a skirmish as the artillery was crossing. Seeing that Lafayette had extricated himself from their hands, and was so strongly posted, they gave over all attack, and returned somewhat disconcerted to Philadelphia ; while the youthful marquis rejoined the army at Valley Forge, where he was received with acclamations.

The exchange of General Lee for General Prescott, so long delayed by various impediments, had recently been effected ; and Lee was reinstated in his position of second in command. Colonel Ethan Allen, also, had been

released from his long captivity in exchange for Colonel Campbell. Allen paid a visit to the camp at Valley Forge, where he had much to tell of his various vicissitudes and hardships. Washington, in a letter to the President of Congress suggesting that something should be done for Allen, observes: "His fortitude and firmness seem to have placed him out of the reach of misfortune. There is an original something about him that commands admiration, and his long captivity and sufferings have only served to increase, if possible, his enthusiastic zeal. He appears very desirous of rendering his services to the States, and of being employed; and at the same time, he does not discover any ambition for high rank."

In a few days, a brevet commission of colonel arrived for Allen; but he had already left camp for his home in Vermont, where he appears to have hung up his sword; for we meet with no further achievements by him on record.

Indications continued to increase of the departure of troops from Philadelphia. The military quarters were in a stir and bustle; effects were packed up; many sold at auction; baggage and heavy cannon embarked; transports fitted up for the reception of horses, and hay taken on board. Was the whole army to leave the city, or only a part? The former

was probable. A war between France and England appeared to be impending: in that event, Philadelphia would be an ineligible position for the British army.

New York, it was concluded, would be the place of destination; either as a rendezvous, or a post whence to attempt the occupation of the Hudson. Would they proceed thither by land or water? Supposing the former, Washington would gladly have taken post in Jersey, to oppose or harass them, on their march through that State. His camp, however, was encumbered by upwards of three thousand sick; and covered a great amount of military stores. He dared not weaken it by detaching a sufficient force; especially as it was said the enemy intended to attack him before their departure.

For three weeks affairs remained in this state. Washington held his army ready to march toward the Hudson at a moment's warning; and sent General Maxwell with a brigade of Jersey troops, to co-operate with Major-General Dickinson and the militia of that State, in breaking down the bridges and harassing the enemy, should they actually attempt to march through it. At the same time he wrote to General Gates, who was now at his post on the Hudson, urging him to call in as large a

force of militia as he could find subsistence for, and to be on the alert for the protection of that river.

In the meantime, the commissioners empowered under the new Conciliatory Bills to negotiate the restoration of peace between Great Britain and her former colonies, arrived in the Delaware in the *Trident* ship of war. These were Frederick Howard, Earl of Carlisle; William Eden (afterwards Lord Auckland), brother of the last colonial governor of Maryland; and George Johnstone, sometimes called commodore, from having served in the navy, but more commonly known as Governor Johnstone, having held that office in Florida. He was now a member of Parliament, and in the opposition. Their secretary was the celebrated Dr. Adam Ferguson, an Edinburgh professor; author of a Roman History, and who in his younger days (he was now about fifty-five years of age) had been a "fighting chaplain at Fontenoy."

The choice of commissioners gave rise to much criticism and cavil: especially that of Lord Carlisle, a young man of fashion, amiable and intelligent, it is true, but unfitted by his soft European habits for such a mission. "To captivate the rude members of Congress," said Wilkes, "and civilize the wild inhabitants of

an unpolished country, a noble peer was very properly appointed chief of the honorable embassy. His lordship, to the surprise and admiration of that part of the New World, carried with him a green ribbon, the gentle manners, winning behavior, and soft insinuating address of a modern man of quality and a professed courtier. The muses and graces with a group of little laughing loves were in his train, and for the first time crossed the Atlantic." *

Mr. Eden, by his letter still in existence,† appears to have been unkindly disposed towards America. Johnstone was evidently the strongest member of the commission. Fox pronounced him "the only one who could have the ear of the people in America;" he alone had been their friend in Great Britain, and was acquainted with the people of Pennsylvania.

The commissioners landed at Philadelphia on the 6th of June, and discovered, to their astonishment, that they had come out, as it were, in the dark, on a mission in which but a half confidence had been reposed in them by government. Three weeks before their departure from England, orders had been sent out to Sir Henry Clinton to evacuate Philadel-

* 19 *Parliamentary Hist.*, 1338.

† Force's *Am. Archives*, vol. i., 962.

phia and concentrate his forces at New York; yet these orders were never imparted to them. Their letters and speeches testify their surprise and indignation at finding their plan of operations so completely disconcerted by their own cabinet. "We found everything here," writes Lord Carlisle, "in great confusion; the army upon the point of leaving the town, and about three thousand of the miserable inhabitants embarked on board of our ships, to convey them from a place where they think they would receive no mercy from those who will take possession after us."

So Governor Johnstone, in speeches subsequently made in Parliament: "On my arrival, the orders for the evacuation had been made public—the city was in the utmost consternation: a more affecting spectacle of woe I never beheld." And again: "The commissioners were received at Philadelphia with all the joy which a generous people could express. Why were you so long a-coming? was the general cry. Do not abandon us. Retain the army and send them against Washington, and the affair is over. Ten thousand men will arm for you in this province, and ten thousand in the lower counties, the moment you take the field and can get arms. The declarations were general and notorious, and I am persuaded, if

we had been at liberty to have acted in the field, our most sanguine expectations would have been fulfilled."

The orders for evacuation, however, were too peremptory to be evaded, but Johnstone declared that if he had known of them, he never would have gone on the mission. The commissioners had prepared a letter for Congress, merely informing that body of their arrival and powers, and their disposition to promote a reconciliation, intending quietly to await an answer; but the unexpected situation of affairs occasioned by the order for evacuation, obliged them to alter their resolution, and to write one of a different character, bringing forward at once all the powers delegated to them.

On the 9th of June, Sir Henry Clinton informed Washington of the arrival of the commissioners, and requested a passport for their secretary, Dr. Ferguson, the historian, to proceed to Yorktown bearing a letter to Congress. Washington sent to Congress a copy of Sir Henry's letter, but did not consider himself at liberty to grant the passport until authorized by them.

Without waiting the result, the commissioners forwarded, by the ordinary military post, their letter, accompanied by the "Conciliatory Acts" and other documents. They

were received by Congress on the 13th. The letter of the commissioners was addressed "to His Excellency, Henry Laurens, the President and others, the members of Congress." The reading of the letter was interrupted; and it came near being indignantly rejected, on account of expressions disrespectful to France; charging it with being the insidious enemy of both England and her colonies, and interposing its pretended friendship to the latter "only to prevent reconciliation and prolong this destructive war." Several days elapsed before the Congress recovered sufficient equanimity to proceed with the despatches of the commissioners, and deliberate on the propositions they contained.

In their reply, signed by the president (June 17th), they observed, that nothing but an earnest desire to spare further effusion of blood, could have induced them to read a paper containing expressions so disrespectful to his most Christian Majesty, or to consider propositions so derogatory to the honor of an independent nation; and in conclusion, they expressed a readiness to treat as soon as the king of Great Britain should demonstrate a sincere disposition for peace, either by an explicit acknowledgment of the independence of the States, or by the withdrawal of his fleets and armies.

We will not follow the commissioners through their various attempts, overtly and covertly, to forward the object of their mission. We cannot, however, pass unnoticed an intimation conveyed from Governor Johnstone to General Joseph Reed, at this time an influential member of Congress, that effectual services on his part to restore the union of the two countries might be rewarded by ten thousand pounds sterling, and any office in the colonies in His Majesty's gift. To this, Reed made his brief and memorable reply: "I am not worth purchasing; but such as I am, the King of Great Britain is not rich enough to do it."

A letter was also written by Johnstone to Robert Morris, the celebrated financier, then also a member of Congress, containing the following significant paragraph: "I believe the men who have conducted the affairs of America incapable of being influenced by improper motives; but in all such transactions there is risk; and I think that whoever ventures, should be assured, at the same time, that honor and emolument should naturally follow the fortune of those who have steered the vessel in the storm and brought her safely into port. I think Washington and the President have a right to every favor that grateful nations can bestow, if they could once more unite our

interest, and spare the miseries and devastation of war."

These transactions and letters being communicated to Congress, were pronounced by them daring and atrocious attempts to corrupt their integrity, and they resolved that it was incompatible with their honor to hold any correspondence or intercourse with the commissioner who made it; especially to negotiate with him upon affairs in which the cause of liberty was concerned.

The commissioners, disappointed in their hopes of influencing Congress, attempted to operate on the feelings of the public, at one time by conciliatory appeals, at another by threats and denunciations. Their last measure was to publish a manifesto recapitulating their official proceedings; stating the refusal of Congress to treat with them, and offering to treat within forty days with deputies from all or any of the colonies or provincial Assemblies; holding forth, at the same time, the usual offers of conditional amnesty. This measure, like all which had preceded it, proved ineffectual; the commissioners embarked for England, and so terminated this tardy and blundering attempt of the British Government and its agents to effect a reconciliation—the last attempt that was made.

Lord Carlisle, who had taken the least prominent part in these transactions, thus writes in the course of them to his friend, the witty George Selwyn, and his letter may serve as a peroration. "I inclose you our manifesto, which you will never read. 'T is a sort of dying speech of the commission: an effort from which I expect little success. . . . Everything is upon a great scale upon this continent. The rivers are immense; the climate violent in heat and cold; the prospects magnificent; the thunder and lightning tremendous. The disorders incident to the country make every constitution tremble. We have nothing on a great scale with us but our blunders, our misconduct, our ruin, our losses, our disgraces and misfortunes, that will mark the reign of a prince who deserves better treatment and kinder fortunes."

Chapter X.

Preparations to Evacuate Philadelphia—Washington Calls a Council of War—Lee Opposed to any Attack—Philadelphia Evacuated—Movements in Pursuit of Sir Henry Clinton—Another Council of War—Conflict of Opinions—Contradictory Conduct of Lee Respecting the Command—The Battle of Monmouth Court-House—Subsequent March of the Armies.

THE delay of the British to evacuate Philadelphia tasked the sagacity of Washington, but he supposed it to have been caused by the arrival of the commissioners from Great Britain. The force in the city in the meantime had been much reduced. Five thousand men had been detached to aid in a sudden descent on the French possessions in the West Indies; three thousand more to Florida. Most of the cavalry with other troops had been shipped with the provision train and heavy baggage to New York. The effective force remaining with Sir

Henry was now about nine or ten thousand men; that under Washington was a little more than twelve thousand Continentals, and about thirteen hundred militia. It had already acquired considerable proficiency in tactics and field manœuvring under the diligent instructions of Steuben.

Early in June, it was evident that a total evacuation of the city was on the point of taking place; and circumstances convinced Washington that the march of the main body would be through the Jerseys. Some of his officers thought differently, especially General Lee, who had now command of a division composed of Poor, Varnum, and Huntington's brigades. Lee, since his return to the army, had resumed somewhat of his old habit of cynical supervision, and had his circle of admirers, among whom he indulged in caustic comments on military affairs and the merits of commanders.

On the present occasion he addressed a letter to Washington, dated June 15th, suggesting other plans which the enemy might have in view. "Whether they do or do not adopt any of these plans," added he, "there can be no inconvenience arise from considering the subject, nor from devising means of defeating their purposes, on the supposition that they will."

Washington, in his reply, gave the sugges-

tions of Lee a candid and respectful consideration, but in the course of his letter took occasion to hint a little gentle admonition.

"I shall always be happy," writes he, "in a free communication of your sentiments upon any important subject relative to the service, and only beg that they may come directly to myself. The custom which many officers have, of speaking freely, and reprobating measures, which, upon investigation, may be found to be unavoidable, is never found to be productive of good, but often of very mischievous consequences."

In consequence, probably, of the suggestions of Lee, Washington called a general council of war on the 17th, to consider what measures to adopt, whether to undertake any enterprise against the enemy in their present circumstances—whether the army should remain in its actual position, until the final evacuation had taken place, or move immediately toward the Delaware—whether, should the enemy march through the Jerseys, it would be advisable to attack them while on the way, or to push on directly to the Hudson, and secure that important communication between the Eastern and Southern States? In case an attack while on the march were determined on, should it be a partial or a general one?

Lee spoke eloquently on the occasion. He was opposed to an attack of any kind. He would make a bridge of gold for the enemy. They were nearly equal in number to the Americans, and far superior in discipline; in fact, never had troops been better disciplined. An attack would endanger the safety of the cause. It was now in a prosperous state, in consequence of the foreign alliance just formed; all ought not to be put at risk at the very moment of making such an alliance. He advised merely to follow the enemy, observe their motions, and prevent them from committing any excesses.

Lee's opinions had still great weight with the army; most of the officers, both foreign and American, concurred with him. Greene, Lafayette, Wayne, and Cadwalader, thought differently. They could not brook that the enemy should evacuate the city, and make a long march through the country unmolested. An opportunity might present itself, amid the bustle and confusion of departure, or while embarrassed in defiles with a cumbrous baggage train, of striking some signal blow, that would indemnify them for all they had suffered in their long and dreary encampment at Valley Forge.

Washington's heart was with this latter

counsel; but seeing such want of unanimity among his generals, he requested their opinions in writing. Before these were given in, word was brought that the enemy had actually evacuated the city.

Sir Henry had taken his measures with great secrecy and despatch. The army commenced moving at three o'clock on the morning of the 18th, retiring to a point of land below the town formed by the confluence of the Delaware and Schuylkill, and crossing the former river in boats. By ten o'clock in the morning the rear-guard landed on the Jersey shore.

On the first intelligence of this movement, Washington detached General Maxwell with his brigade, to co-operate with General Dickinson and the New Jersey militia in harassing the enemy on their march. He sent General Arnold, also, with a force to take command of Philadelphia, that officer being not yet sufficiently recovered from his wound for field service; then breaking up his camp at Valley Forge, he pushed forward with his main force in pursuit of the enemy.

As the route of the latter lay along the eastern bank of the Delaware as high as Trenton, Washington was obliged to make considerable circuit, so as to cross the river higher up at Coryell's Ferry, near the place where eighteen

months previously he had crossed to attack the Hessians.

On the 20th, he writes to General Gates: "I am now with the main body of the army within ten miles of Coryell's Ferry. General Lee is advanced with six brigades, and will cross to-night or to-morrow morning. By the last intelligence the enemy are near Mount Holly, and moving very slowly; but as there are so many roads open to them, their route could not be ascertained. I shall enter the Jerseys to-morrow, and give you the earliest notice of their movements, and whatever may affect you."

Heavy rains and sultry summer heat retarded his movements; but the army crossed on the 24th. The British were now at Moorestown and Mount Holly. Thence they might take the road on the left for Brunswick, and so on to Staten Island and New York; or the road to the right through Monmouth, by the Heights of Middletown to Sandy Hook. Uncertain which they might adopt, Washington detached Colonel Morgan with six hundred picked men to reinforce Maxwell, and hang on their rear; while he himself pushed forward with the main body toward Princeton, cautiously keeping along the mountainous country to the left of the most northern road.

The march of Sir Henry was very slow. His army was encumbered with baggage and provisions, and all the nameless superfluities in which British officers are prone to indulge. His train of wheel carriages and bat horses was twelve miles in extent. He was retarded by heavy rain and intolerable heat; bridges had to be built and causeways constructed over streams and marshes, where they had been destroyed by the Americans.

From his dilatory movements, Washington suspected Sir Henry of a design to draw him down into the level country, and then, by a rapid movement on his right, to gain possession of the strong ground above him, and bring him to a general action on disadvantageous terms. He himself was inclined for a general action whenever it could be made on suitable ground; he halted, therefore, at Hopewell, about five miles from Princeton, and held another council of war, while his troops were reposing and refreshing themselves. The result of it, writes his aide-de-camp, Colonel Hamilton, "would have done honor to the most honorable society of midwives, and to them only."* The purport was to keep at a distance from the enemy, and annoy them by detachments. Lee, according to Hamilton, was the prime mover of

* MS. letter of Hamilton to Elias Boudinot.

this plan : in pursuance of which a detachment of fifteen hundred men was sent off under Brigadier-General Scott, to join the other troops near the enemy's line. Lee was even opposed to sending so large a number.

Generals Greene, Wayne, and Lafayette were in the minority in the council, and subsequently gave separately the same opinion in writing, that the rear of the enemy should be attacked by a strong detachment, while the main army should be so disposed as to give a general battle, should circumstances render it advisable. As this opinion coincided with his own, Washington determined to act upon it.

Sir Henry Clinton in the meantime had advanced to Allentown, on his way to Brunswick, to embark on the Raritan. Finding the passage of that river likely to be strongly disputed by the forces under Washington, and others advancing from the north under Gates, he changed his plan, and turned to the right by a road leading through Freehold to Navesink and Sandy Hook; to embark at the latter place.

Washington, no longer in doubt as to the route of the enemy's march, detached Wayne with one thousand men to join the advanced corps, which, thus augmented, was upward of four thousand strong. The command of the

advance properly belonged to Lee as senior major-general; but it was eagerly solicited by Lafayette, as an attack by it was intended, and Lee was strenuously opposed to everything of the kind. Washington willingly gave his consent, provided General Lee were satisfied with the arrangement. The latter ceded the command without hesitation, observing to the marquis that he was well pleased to be freed from all responsibility in executing plans which he was sure would fail.

Lafayette set out on the 25th to form a junction as soon as possible with the force under General Scott; while Washington, leaving his baggage at Kingston, moved with the main body to Cranberry, three miles in the rear of the advanced corps, to be ready to support it.

Scarce, however, had Lee relinquished the command, when he changed his mind. In a note to Washington, he declared that, in assenting to the arrangement, he had considered the command of the detachment one more fitting a young volunteering general than a veteran like himself, second in command in the army. He now viewed it in a different light. Lafayette would be at the head of all the continental parties already in the line; six thousand men at least; a command next to that of the commander-in-chief. Should the detachment

march, therefore, he entreated to have the command of it. So far he spoke personally, "but," added he, "to speak as an officer, I do not think that this detachment ought to march at all, until at least the head of the enemy's right column has passed Cranberry; then if it is necessary to march the whole army, I cannot see any impropriety in the marquis' commanding this detachment, or a greater, as an advanced guard of the army; but if this detachment, with Maxwell's corps, Scott's, Morgan's and Jackson's, is to be considered as a separate, chosen, active corps, and put under the marquis' command until the enemy leave the Jerseys, both myself and Lord Stirling will be disgraced."

Washington was perplexed how to satisfy Lee's punctilious claims without wounding the feelings of Lafayette. A change in the disposition of the enemy's line of march furnished an expedient. Sir Henry Clinton, finding himself harassed by light troops on the flanks, and in danger of an attack in the rear, placed all his baggage in front under the convoy of Knyphausen, while he threw the main strength of his army in the rear under Lord Cornwallis.

This made it necessary for Washington to strengthen his advanced corps; and he took this occasion to detach Lee, with Scott's and

Varnum's brigades, to support the force under Lafayette. As Lee was the senior major-general, this gave him the command of the whole advance. Washington explained the matter in a letter to the marquis, who resigned the command to Lee when the latter joined him on the 27th. That evening the enemy encamped on high ground near Monmouth Court-house. Lee encamped with the advance at Englishtown, about five miles distant. The main body was three miles in his rear.

About sunset Washington rode forward to the advance, and anxiously reconnoitered Sir Henry's position. It was protected by woods and morasses, and too strong to be attacked with a prospect of success. Should the enemy, however, proceed ten or twelve miles farther unmolested, they would gain the heights of Middletown, and be on ground still more difficult. To prevent this, he resolved that an attack should be made on their rear early in the morning, as soon as their front should be in motion. This plan he communicated to General Lee, in presence of his officers, ordering him to make dispositions for the attack, keeping his troops lying on their arms, ready for action on the shortest notice; a disposition he intended to observe with his own troops. This done, he rode back to the main body.

Apprehensive that Sir Henry might decamp in the night, Washington sent orders to Lee before midnight, to detach six or seven hundred men to lie near the enemy, watch and give notice of their movements, and hold them in check when on the march, until the rest of the troops could come up. General Dickinson was charged by Lee with this duty. Morgan was likewise stationed with his corps to be ready for skirmishing.

Early in the morning, Washington received an express from Dickinson, informing him that the enemy were in motion. He instantly sent orders to Lee to push forward and attack them, unless there should be powerful reasons to the contrary, adding, that he was coming on to support him. For that purpose he immediately set forward with his own troops, ordering them to throw by their knapsacks and blankets.

Knyphausen, with the British vanguard, had begun about daybreak to descend into the valley between Monmouth Court-house and Middletown. To give the long train of wagons and pack-horses time to get well on the way, Sir Henry Clinton with his choice troops remained in camp on the heights of Freehold, until eight o'clock, when he likewise resumed the line of March toward Middletown.

In the meantime Lee, on hearing of the early

movement of the enemy, had advanced with the brigades of Wayne and Maxwell, to support the light troops engaged in skirmishing. The difficulty of reconnoitering a country cut up by woods and morasses, and the perplexity occasioned by contradictory reports, embarrassed his movements. Being joined by Lafayette with the main body of the advance, he had now about four thousand men at his command, independent of those under Morgan and General Dickinson. Arriving on the heights of Freehold, and riding forward with General Wayne to an open place to reconnoiter, Lee caught sight of a force under march, but partly hidden from view by intervening woods. Supposing it to be a mere covering party of about two thousand men, he detached Wayne with seven hundred men and two pieces of artillery, to skirmish in its rear and hold it in check; while he, with the rest of his force, taking a shorter road through the woods, would get in front of it, and cut it off from the main body. He at the same time sent a message to Washington, apprising him of this movement and of his certainty of success.*

Washington in the meantime was on his march with the main body, to support the advance, as he had promised. The booming of

* Evidence of Dr. McHenry on the Court-Martial.

cannon at a distance indicated that the attack so much desired had commenced, and caused him to quicken his march. Arrived near Freehold church, where the road forked, he detached Greene with part of his forces to the right, to flank the enemy in the rear of Monmouth Court-house, while he, with the rest of the column, would press forward by the other road.

Washington had alighted while giving these directions, and was standing with his arm thrown over his horse, when a countryman rode up and said the continental troops were retreating. Washington was provoked at what he considered a false alarm. The man pointed, as his authority, to an American fifer who just then came up in breathless affright. The fifer was ordered into custody to prevent his spreading an alarm among the troops who were advancing, and was threatened with a flogging should he repeat the story.

Springing on his horse, Washington had moved forward but a short distance when he met other fugitives, one in the garb of a soldier, who all concurred in the report. He now sent forward Colonels Fitzgerald and Harrison, to learn the truth, while he himself spurred past Freehold meeting-house. Between that edifice and the morass beyond it, he met Grayson's

and Patton's regiments in most disorderly retreat, jaded with heat and fatigue. Riding up to the officer at their head, Washington demanded whether the whole advanced corps were retreating. The officer believed they were.

It seemed incredible. There had been scarce any firing—Washington had received no notice of the retreat from Lee. He was still almost inclined to doubt, when the heads of several columns of the advance began to appear. It was too evident—the whole advance was falling back on the main body, and no notice had been given to him. One of the first officers that came up was Colonel Shreve, at the head of his regiment; Washington, greatly surprised and alarmed, asked the meaning of this retreat. The colonel smiled significantly—he did not know—he had retreated by order. There had been no fighting excepting a slight skirmish with the enemy's cavalry, which had been repulsed.

A suspicion flashed across Washington's mind, of wrong-headed conduct on the part of Lee, to mar the plan of attack adopted contrary to his counsels. Ordering Colonel Shreve to march his men over the morass, halt them on the hill beyond and refresh them, he galloped forward to stop the retreat of the rest of

the advance, his indignation kindling as he rode. At the rear of the regiment he met Major Howard; he, too, could give no reason for the retreat, but seemed provoked at it—declaring that he had never seen the like. Another officer exclaimed with an oath that they were flying from a shadow.

Arriving at a rising ground, Washington beheld Lee approaching with the residue of his command in full retreat. By this time he was thoroughly exasperated.

"What is the meaning of all this, sir?" demanded he, in the sternest and even fiercest tone, as Lee rode up to him.

Lee for a moment was disconcerted, and hesitated in making a reply, for Washington's aspect, according to Lafayette, was terrible.

"I desire to know the meaning of this disorder and confusion," was again demanded still more vehemently.

Lee, stung by the manner more than the words of the demand, made an angry reply, and provoked still sharper expressions, which have been variously reported. He attempted a hurried explanation. His troops had been thrown into confusion by contradictory intelligence; by disobedience of orders; by the meddling and blundering of individuals; and he had not felt disposed, he said, to beard the

whole British army with troops in such a situation.

"I have certain information," rejoined Washington, "that it was merely a strong covering party."

"That may be, but it was stronger than mine, and I did not think proper to run such a risk."

"I am very sorry," replied Washington, "that you undertook the command, unless you meant to fight the enemy."

"I did not think it prudent to bring on a general engagement."

"Whatever your opinion may have been," replied Washington, disdainfully, "I expected my orders would have been obeyed."

This all passed rapidly, and, as it were, in flashes, for there was no time for parley. The enemy were within a quarter of an hour's march. Washington's appearance had stopped the retreat. The fortunes of the day were to be retrieved, if possible, by instant arrangements. These he proceeded to make with great celerity. The place was favorable for a stand; it was a rising ground, to which the enemy could approach only over a narrow causeway. The rallied troops were hastily formed upon this eminence. Colonels Stewart and Ramsey, with two batteries, were stationed in a covert

of woods on their left, to protect them and keep the enemy at bay. Colonel Oswald was posted for the same purpose on a height, with two field-pieces. The promptness with which everything was done showed the effects of the Baron Steuben's discipline.

In the interim, Lee, being asked about the disposition of some of the troops, replied that he could give no orders in the matter, as he supposed General Washington intended he should have no further command.

Shortly after this, Washington, having made all his arrangements with great despatch, but admirable clearness and precision, rode back to Lee in calmer mood, and inquired, "Will you retain the command on this height or not? if you will, I will return to the main body, and have it formed on the next height."

"It is equal to me where I command," replied Lee.

"I expect you will take proper means for checking the enemy," rejoined Washington.

"Your orders shall be obeyed; and I shall not be the first to leave the ground," was the reply.

A warm cannonade by Oswald, Stewart, and Ramsey, had the desired effect. The enemy were brought to a stand, and Washington had time to gallop back and bring on the main

body. This he formed on an eminence, with a wood in the rear and the morasss in front. The left wing was commanded by Lord Stirling, who had with him a detachment of artillery and several field-pieces. General Greene was on his right.

Lee had maintained his advanced position with great spirit, but was at length obliged to retire. He brought off his troops in good order across a causeway which traversed the morass in front of Lord Stirling. As he had promised, he was the last to leave the ground. Having formed his men in a line, beyond the morass, he rode up to Washington. "Here, sir, are my troops," said he; "how is it your pleasure I should dispose of them?" Washington saw that the poor fellows were exhausted by marching, counter-marching, hard fighting, and the intolerable heat of the weather: he ordered Lee, therefore, to repair with them to the rear of Englishtown, and assemble there all the scattered fugitives he might meet with.

The batteries under the direction of Lord Stirling opened a brisk and well-sustained fire upon the enemy; who, finding themselves warmly opposed in front, attempted to turn the left flank of the Americans, but were driven back by detached parties of infantry stationed there. They then attempted the right; but

here were met by General Greene, who had planted his artillery under Knox, on a commanding ground, and not only checked them but enfiladed those who were in front of the left wing. Wayne too, with an advanced party posted in an orchard, and partly sheltered by a barn, kept up a severe and well-directed fire upon the enemy's centre. Repeated attempts were made to dislodge him, but in vain. Colonel Monckton of the royal grenadiers, who had distinguished himself and been wounded in the battle of Long Island, now undertook to drive Wayne from his post at the point of the bayonet. Having made a brief harangue to his men, he led them on in column. Wayne's men reserved their fire, until Colonel Monckton, waving his sword, called out to his grenadiers to charge. At that instant a sheeted volley laid him low, and made great slaughter in his column, which was again repulsed.

The enemy at length gave way, and fell back to the ground which Lee had occupied in the morning. Here their flanks were secured by woods and morasses, and their front could only be approached across a narrow causeway.

Notwithstanding the difficulties of the position, Washington prepared to attack it; ordering General Poor with his own and the Carolina brigade, to move round upon their right, and

General Woodford on their left; while the artillery should gall them in front. Before these orders could be carried into effect the day was at an end. Many of the soldiers had sunk upon the ground, overcome by fatigue and the heat of the weather; all needed repose. The troops, therefore, which had been in the advance, were ordered to lie on their arms on the ground they occupied, so as to be ready to make the attack by daybreak. The main army did the same, on the field of action, to be at hand to support them. Washington lay on his cloak at the foot of a tree, with Lafayette beside him, talking over the strange conduct of Lee; whose disorderly retreat had come so near being fatal to the army.

It was indeed a matter of general perplexity, to which the wayward character of Lee greatly contributed. Some who recollected his previous opposition to all plan of attack, almost suspected him of wilfully aiming to procure a defeat. It would appear, however, that he had been really surprised and thrown into confusion by a move of Sir Henry Clinton, who, seeing the force under Lee descending on his rear from Freehold heights, had suddenly turned upon it, aided by troops from Knyphausen's division, to oblige it to call to its assistance the flanking parties under Morgan and

Dickinson, which were threatening his baggage train. So that Lee, instead of a mere covering party which he had expected to cut off, had found himself front to front with the whole rear division of the British army; and that too, on unfavorable ground, with a deep ravine and a morass in his rear.

He endeavored to form his troops for action. Oswald's artillery began to play, and there was some skirmishing with the enemy's light horse, in which they were repulsed. But mistakes occurred; orders were misunderstood; one corps after another fell back, until the whole retreated, almost without a struggle, before an inferior force. Lee, himself, seemed to partake of the confusion; taking no pains to check the retrograde movement, nor to send notice of it to the main body upon which they were to fall back.

What opinions Washington gave on the subject, in the course of his conversation with the marquis, the latter does not tell us; after it was ended, he wrapped himself in his cloak, and slept at the foot of the tree, among his soldiers.

At daybreak the drums beat the reveillé. The troops roused themselves from their heavy sleep, and prepared for action. To their surprise, the enemy had disappeared: there was a deserted camp, in which were found four offi-

cers and about forty privates, too severely wounded to be conveyed away by the retreating army. Sir Henry Clinton, it appeared, had allowed his wearied troops but short repose on the preceding night. At ten o'clock, when the American forces were buried in their first sleep, he had set forward to join the division under Knyphausen, which, with the baggage train, having pushed on during the action, was far on the road to Middletown. So silent had been his retreat, that it was unheard by General Poor's advance party, which lay near by.

The distance to which the enemy must by this time have attained, the extreme heat of the weather, and the fatigued condition of the troops, deterred Washington from continuing a pursuit through a country where the roads were deep and sandy, and there was great scarcity of water. Besides, persons well acquainted with the country assured him that it would be impossible to annoy the enemy in their embarkation, as he must approach the place by a narrow passage, capable of being defended by a few men against his whole force. Detaching General Maxwell's brigade and Morgan's rifle corps, therefore, to hang on the rear of the enemy, prevent depredation and encourage desertions, he determined to shape his course with his main body by Brunswick toward the Hud-

son, lest Sir Henry should have any design upon the posts there.

The American loss in the recent battle was eight officers and sixty-one privates killed, and about one hundred and sixty wounded. Among the slain were Lieutenant-Colonel Bonner of Pennsylvania, and Major Dickinson of Virginia, both greatly regretted.

The officers who had charge of the burying parties reported that they found two hundred and forty-five non-commissioned officers and privates, and four officers left dead by the enemy on the field of battle. There were fresh graves in the vicinity also, into which the enemy had hurried their slain before retreating. The number of prisoners, including those found wounded, was upwards of one hundred.

Some of the troops on both sides had perished in the morass, some where found on the border of a stream which ran through it among alder bushes, whither, overcome by heat, fatigue, and thirst, they had crawled to drink and die.

Among the gallant slain of the enemy was Colonel Monckton, who fell so bravely when leading on his grenadiers. His remains were interred in the burial-ground of the Freehold meeting-house, upon a stone of which edifice his name is rudely cut.*

* Lossing's *Field Book of the Revolution*, ii., 363.

After giving his troops a day's repose Washington decamped on the 30th. His march lay through a country destitute of water, with deep, sandy roads wearying to the feet, and reflecting the intolerable heat and glare of a July sun. Many of the troops, harassed by previous fatigue, gave out by the way. Some few died, and a number of horses were likewise lost. Washington, ever considerate of the health and comfort of his men, encamped near Brunswick on open, airy grounds, and gave them time to repose; while Lieutenant-Colonel Aaron Burr, at that time a young and enterprising officer, was sent on a reconnoitering expedition, to learn the movements and intentions of the enemy. He was authorized to despatch trusty persons into New York to make observations, collect reports, and get newspapers. Others were to be sent to the heights of Bergen, Weehawk, and Hoboken, which command a view of the bay and river, to observe the situation of the enemy's forces, and note whether any movement among the shipping gave signs of an expedition up the Hudson; and immediate object of solicitude.

Sir Henry Clinton with the royal army had arrived at the Highlands of Navesink, in the neighborhood of Sandy Hook, on the 30th of June. He had lost many men by desertion,

Hessians especially, during his march through the Jerseys, which, with his losses by killed, wounded, and captured, had diminished his army more than two thousand men. The storms of the preceding winter had cut off the peninsula of Sandy Hook from the main-land, and formed a deep channel between them. Fortunately the squadron of Lord Howe had arrived the day before, and was at anchor within the Hook. A bridge was immediately made across the channel with the boats of the ships, over which the army passed to the Hook on the 5th of July, and thence was distributed.

It was now encamped in three divisions on Staten Island, Long Island, and the Island of New York: apparently without any immediate design of offensive operations. There was a vigorous press in New York to man the large ships and fit them for sea, but this was in consequence of a report that a French fleet had arrived on the coast.

Relieved by this intelligence from all apprehensions of an expedition by the enemy up the Hudson, Washington relaxed the speed of his movements, and halted for a few days at Paramus, sparing his troops as much as possible during the extreme summer heats.

Chapter XI.

Correspondence between Lee and Washington Relative to the Affair of Monmouth—Lee Asks a Trial by Court-Martial—The Verdict—Lee's Subsequent History.

HAVING brought the army to a halt, we have time to notice a correspondence between General Lee and Washington immediately subsequent to the affair of Monmouth. The pride of the general had been deeply wounded by the rebuke he had received on the field of battle. On the following day (June 29th) he addressed a note to Washington on the subject. By mistake it was dated July 1st. "From the knowledge I have of your Excellency's character," writes he, "I must conclude that nothing but the misinformation of some very stupid, or misrepresentation of some very wicked person, could have occasioned your making use of so very singular expressions as you did on my coming up to the ground where you had taken

post. They implied that I was guilty either of disobedience of orders, want of conduct, or want of courage. Your Excellency will therefore infinitely oblige me by letting me know on which of these three articles you ground your charge. I ever had, and hope ever shall have, the greatest respect and veneration for General Washington. I think him endowed with many great and good qualities; but in this instance, I must pronounce that he has been guilty of an act of cruel injustice towards a man, who certainly has some pretensions to the regard of every servant of this country. And I think, sir, I have a right to demand some reparation for the injury committed; and, unless I can obtain it, I must in justice to myself, when this campaign is closed, which I believe will close the war, retire from the service at the head of which is placed a man capable of offering such injuries. But at the same time, in justice to you, I must repeat that I from my soul believe that it is not a motion of your own breast, but instigated by some of those dirty earwigs, who will forever insinuate themselves near persons high in office: for I really am convinced that when General Washington acts for himself, no man in his army will have reason to complain of injustice or indecorum."

The following was Washington's reply :

"SIR,—I received your letter (dated through mistake the 1st of July), expressed as I conceive in terms highly improper. I am not conscious of making use of any very singular expressions at the time of meeting you, as you intimate. What I recollect to have said was dictated by duty and warranted by the occasion. As soon as circumstances will permit, you shall have an opportunity of justifying yourself to the army, to Congress, to America, and to the world in general ; or of convincing them that you were guilty of a breach of orders, and of misbehavior before the enemy on the 28th instant, in not attacking them as you had been directed, and in making an unnecessary, disorderly, and shameful retreat. I am," etc., etc.

To this Lee rejoined, in a note, misdated 28th June. "Sir, you cannot afford me greater pleasure than in giving me the opportunity of showing to America the sufficiency of her respective servants. I trust that temporary power of office, and the tinsel dignity attending it, will not be able, by all the mists they can raise, to offuscate the bright rays of truth. In the meantime, your Excellency can have no objection to my retiring from the army," etc.

Shortly after despatching this note, Lee addressed another to Washington. "I have reflected on both your situation and mine," writes he, "and beg leave to observe, that it will be for our mutual convenience that a court of inquiry should be immediately ordered: but I could wish that it might be a court-martial; for, if the affair is drawn into length, it may be difficult to collect the necessary evidences, and perhaps might bring on a paper war betwixt the adherents to both parties, which may occasion some disagreeable feuds on the continent; for all are not my friends, nor all your admirers. I must entreat, therefore, from your love of justice, that you will immediately exhibit your charge, and that on the first halt I may be brought to a trial."

Washington in reply acknowledged the receipt of the two last notes, and added, "I have sent Colonel Scammel and the adjutant-general, to put you under arrest, who will deliver you a copy of the charges on which you will be tried."

The following were the charges:

1st. Disobedience of orders, in not attacking the enemy on the 28th June, agreeably to repeated instructions.

2d. Misbehavior before the enemy on the same day, by making an unnecessary, disorderly, and shameful retreat.

3d. Disrespect to the commander-in-chief in two letters, dated the 1st of July, and the 28th of June.

A court-martial was accordingly formed on the 4th of July, at Brunswick, the first halting place. It was composed of one major-general, four brigadiers, and eight colonels, with Lord Stirling as president. It moved with the army, and convened subsequently at Paramus, Peekskill, and Northcastle, the trial lasting until the 12th of August. From the time it commenced, Washington never mentioned Lee's name when he could avoid it, and when he could not, he mentioned it without the smallest degree of acrimony or disrespect.

Lee, on the contrary, indulged his natural irritability of temper and sharpness of tongue. When put on his guard against any intemperate railings against Washington, as calculated to injure his cause, he spurned at the advice. "No attack, it seems, can be made on General Washington but it must recoil on the assailant. I never entertained the most distant wish or intention of attacking General Washington. I have ever honored and respected him as a man and a citizen; but if the circle which surrounds him chooses to erect him into an infallible divinity, I shall certainly prove a heretic; and if, great as he is, he can attempt

wounding everything I ought to hold dear, he must thank his priests if his deityship gets scratched in the scuffle." *

In the repeated sessions of the court-martial and the long examinations which took place, many of the unfavorable impressions first received, concerning the conduct and motives of Lee, were softened. Some of the officers in his detachment, who had made accusations against him to the commander-in-chief previous to the trial, especially Generals Wayne and Scott, were found not to have understood all the circumstances of the case in which he was placed in his encounter with the rear division of Sir Henry Clinton, and that that division had been largely reinforced by troops from General Knyphausen.

Lee defended himself with ability. He contended that after the troops had commenced to fall back, in consequence of a retrograde movement of General Scott, he had intended to form them on the first advantageous ground he could find, and that none such presented itself until he reached the place where he met General Washington; on which very place he had intended to make battle.

He denied that in the whole course of the

* Letter to Joseph Reed. Sparks, *Biog. of Lee*, p. 174.

day he had uttered the word retreat. "But this retreat," said he, "though necessary, was brought about contrary to my orders, contrary to my intention; and, if anything can deduct from my credit, it is, that I did not *order* a retreat which was so necessary." *

Judge Marshall observes of the variety of reasons given by Lee, in justification of his retreat, "if they do not absolutely establish its propriety, they give it so questionable a form, as to render it probable that a public examination never would have taken place, could his proud spirit have stooped to offer explanation instead of outrage to the commander-in-chief."

The result of the prolonged and tedious investigation was that he was found guilty of all the charges exhibited against him; the second charge, however, was softened by omitting the word *shameful*, and convicting him of making an "unnecessary and in some instances a disorderly retreat." He was sentenced to be suspended from all command for one year: the sentence to be approved or set aside by Congress.

We must again anticipate dates, to dispose briefly of the career of General Lee, who is not connected with subsequent events of the Revolution. Congress were more than three

* Letter to Dr. Rush. Sparks, *Biog. of Lee.*

months in coming to a decision on the proceedings of the court-martial. As the House always sat with closed doors, the debates on the subject are unknown, but are said to have been warm. Lee urged for speedy action, and regretted that the people at large could not be admitted to form an audience, when the discussion was entered into of the justice or iniquity, wisdom or absurdity of the sentence that had been passed upon him. At length, on the 5th of December, the sentence was approved in a very thin session of Congress, fifteen members voting in the affirmative and seven in the negative.

From that time Lee was unmeasured in his abuse of Washington, and his reprobation of the court-martial, which he termed a "court of inquisition." He published a long article in the newspapers relative to the trial and to the affair at Monmouth, calculated to injure Washington. "I have neither the leisure nor inclination," observes the latter, "to enter the lists with him in a newspaper; and so far as his production points to personality, I can and do from my inmost soul despise it. . . . It became a part of General Lee's plan, from the moment of his arrest, though it was an event solicited by himself, to have the world believe that he was a persecuted man, and party was

at the bottom of it. But however convenient it may have been for his purposes to establish this belief, I defy him, or his most zealous partisans, to adduce a single instance in proof of it, unless bringing him to trial, at his own request, be considered in this light. I can do more; I will defy any person, out of my own family, to say, that I have ever mentioned his name, if it was to be avoided; and when not, that I have not studiously declined expressing any sentiment of him or his behavior. How far this conduct accords with his, let his own breast decide. . . . As I never entertained any jealousy of him, so neither did I ever do more than common civility and proper respect to his rank required, to conciliate his good opinion. His temper and plans were too versatile and violent to attract my admiration: and, that I have escaped the venom of his tongue and pen so long, is more to be wondered at than applauded; as it is a favor of which no officer, under whose immediate command he ever served, has had the happiness, if happiness can be thus denominated, of boasting." *

Lee's aggressive tongue at length involved him in a quarrel with Colonel Laurens, one of Washington's aides, a high-spirited young gentleman, who felt himself bound to vindicate

* Washington to Reed. Sparks, vol. vi., p. 133.

the honor of his chief. A duel took place, and Lee was wounded in the side.

Towards spring he retired to his estate in Berkley County in Virginia, "to learn to hoe tobacco, which," observes he with a sarcastic innuendo at Washington, "is the best school to form a consummate *General.* This is a discovery I have lately made."

He had led a kind of hermit life on his estate; dogs and horses were his favorite companions. His house is described as being a mere shell, destitute of comforts and conveniences. For want of partitions the different parts were designated by lines chalked on the floor. In one corner was his bed; in another were his books; his saddles and harness in a third; a fourth served as a kitchen.

"Sir," said he to the visitor, "it is the most convenient and economical establishment in the world. The lines of chalk which you see on the floor, mark the divisions of the apartments, and I can sit in any corner and overlook the whole without moving from my chair."

In this retirement he solaced his mortification and resentment by exercising his caustic pen in "Queries Political and Military," intended to disparage the merits and conduct of Washington, and which were published in a Maryland newspaper. His attempts, it is needless to say,

were fallacious, and only recoiled on his own head.

The term of his suspension had expired, when a rumor reached him that Congress intended to take away his commission. He was in bodily pain at the time; his horses were at the door for an excursion of business; the intelligence "ruffled his temper beyond all bounds." In his hurry and heat, without attempting to ascertain the truth of the report, he scrawled the following note to the President of Congress: "Sir, I understand that it is in contemplation of Congress, on the principle of economy, to strike me out of their service. Congress must know very little of me, if they suppose that I would accept of their money, since the confirmation of the wicked and infamous sentence which was passed upon me. I am, sir," etc.

This insolent note occasioned his prompt dismissal from the service. He did not complain of it; but in a subsequent and respectful letter to the president, explained the mistaken information which had produced his note, and the state of body and mind in which it was written. "But, sir," added he, "I must entreat, in the acknowledging of the impropriety and indecorum of my conduct in this affair, it may not be supposed that I mean to

court a restoration to the rank I held; so far from it, that I do assure you, had not the incident fallen out, I should have requested Congress to accept my resignation, as, for obvious reasons, whilst the army is continued in its present circumstances, I could not serve with safety and dignity," etc.

Though bitter in his enmities, Lee had his friendships, and was warm and constant in them as far as his capricious humors would allow. There was nothing crafty or mean in his character, nor do we think he ever engaged in the low intrigues of the cabal; but he was a disappointed and embittered man, and the gall of bitterness overflowed his generous qualities. In such a discordant state of feeling, he was not a man for the sweet solitude of the country. He became weary of his Virginia estate; though in one of the most fertile regions of the Shenandoah Valley. His farm was mismanaged; his agents were unfaithful; he entered into negotiations to dispose of this property, in the course of which he visited Philadelphia. On arriving there, he was taken with chills, followed by a fever, which went on increasing in violence, and terminated fatally. A soldier even unto the end, warlike scenes mingled with the delirium of his malady. In his dying moments he fancied himself on the field of battle.

The last words he was heard to utter were, "Stand by me, my brave grenadiers!"

He left a will and testament strongly marked by his peculiarities. There are bequests to intimates of horses, weapons, and sums to purchase rings of affection; ample and generous provisions for domestics, one of whom he styles his "old and faithful servant, or rather, humble friend." His landed estate in Berkley was to be divided into three equal parts, two of them between two of his former aides-de-camp, and the other third between two gentlemen to whom he felt under obligations. All his residuary property to go to his sister Sidney Lee and her heirs.

Eccentric to the last, one clause of his will regards his sepulture: "I desire most earnestly that I may not be buried in any church or churchyard, or within a mile of any Presbyterian or Anabaptist meeting-house; for, since I have resided in this country, I have kept so much bad company while living, that I do not choose to continue it when dead."

This part of his will was not complied with. He was buried with military honors in the cemetery of Christ church; and his funeral was attended by the highest civic and military characters, and a large concourse of citizens.

The magnanimity exhibited by Washington

in regard to Lee while living, continued after his death. He never spoke of him with asperity, but did justice to his merits, acknowledging that "he possessed many great qualities."

In after years, there was a proposition to publish the manuscripts of General Lee, and Washington was consulted in the matter, as there might be hostile articles among them which he might wish to have omitted. "I can have no request to make concerning the work," writes he in reply. "I never had a difference with that gentleman but on public grounds; and my conduct towards him on this occasion was such, only, as I felt myself indispensably bound to adopt in discharge of the public trust reposed in me. If this produced in him unfavorable sentiments of me, I can never consider the conduct I pursued, with respect to him, either wrong or improper, however I may regret that it may have been differently viewed by him, and that it excited his anger and animadversions. Should there appear in General Lee's writings anything injurious or unfriendly to me, the impartial and dispassionate world must decide how far I deserved it from the general tenor of my conduct."

Chapter XIII.

Arrival of a French Fleet—Correspondence of Washington and the Count D'Estaing—Plans of the Count—Perturbation at New York—Excitement in the French Fleet—Expedition against Rhode Island—Operations by Sea and Land—Failure of the Expedition—Irritation between the Allied Forces—Considerate Letter of Washington to the Count D'Estaing.

WHILE encamped at Paramus, Washington, in the night of the 13th of July, received a letter from Congress informing him of the arrival of a French fleet on the coast; instructing him to concert measures with the commander, the Count D'Estaing, for offensive operations by sea and land, and empowering him to call on the States from New Hampshire to New Jersey inclusive, to aid with their militia.

The fleet in question was composed of twelve ships of the line and six frigates, with a land force of four thousand men. On board of it

came Mons. Gerard, minister from France to the United States, and the Hon. Silas Deane, one of the American ministers who had effected the late treaty of alliance. The fleet had sailed from Toulon on the 13th of April. After struggling against adverse winds for eighty-seven or eighty-eight days, it had made its appearance off the northern extremity of the Virginia coast, and anchored at the mouth of the Delaware, on the 8th of July. Thence the count despatched a letter to Washington, dated at sea. "I have the honor of imparting to your Excellency," writes he, "the arrival of the king's fleet, charged by His Majesty with the glorious task of giving his allies, the United States of America, the most striking proofs of his affection. Nothing will be wanting to my happiness, if I can succeed in it. It is augmented by the consideration of concerting my operations with a general such as your Excellency. The talents and great actions of General Washington have insured him, in the eyes of all Europe, the truly sublime title of Deliverer of America," etc.

The count was unfortunate in the length of his voyage. Had he arrived in ordinary time, he might have entrapped Lord Howe's squadron in the river; co-operated with Washington in investing the British army by sea and

land, and, by cutting off its retreat to New York, compelled it to surrender.

Finding the enemy had evacuated both city and river, the count sent up the French minister and Mr. Deane to Philadelphia in a frigate, and then, putting to sea, continued along the coast. A little earlier, and he might have intercepted the squadron of Lord Howe on its way to New York. It had had but a very few days the advantage of him, and when he arrived with his fleet in the road outside of Sandy Hook, he descried the British ships quietly anchored inside of it.

A frank and cordial correspondence took place forthwith between the count and Washington, and a plan of action was concerted between them by the intervention of confidential officers; Washington's aides-de-camp, Laurens and Hamilton, boarding the fleet while off the Hook, and Major Chouin, a French officer of merit, repairing to the American headquarters.

The first idea of the count was to enter at Sandy Hook, and capture or destroy the British fleet composed of six ships of the line, four fifty-gun ships, and a number of frigates and smaller vessels; should he succeed in this, which his greatly superior force rendered probable, he was to proceed against the city, with the co-operation of the American forces. To

be at hand for such purpose, Washington crossed the Hudson, with his army, at King's Ferry, and encamped at White Plains about the 20th of July.

In the meantime New York was once more in a violent perturbation. "British seamen," says a writer of the times, "endured the mortification, for the first time, of seeing a British fleet blocked up and insulted in their own harbor, and the French flag flying triumphant without. And this was still more embittered and aggravated, by beholding every day vessels under English colors captured under their very eyes by the enemy." * The army responded to their feelings; many royalists of the city, too, hastened to offer their services as volunteers; there was, in short, a prodigious stir in every department, military and naval.

On the other hand, the French officers and crews were in the highest state of excitement and exultation. The long low point of Sandy Hook was all that intervened between them and a splendid triumph, and they anticipated the glory of "delivering America from the English colors which they saw waving on the other side of a simple barrier of sand, upon so great a crowd of masts." †

* *Brit. Ann. Register*, for 1778, p. 229.

† Letter of the Count.

Several experienced American pilots and masters of vessels, however, who had accompanied Colonels Laurens and Hamilton on board of the fleet, declared that there was not sufficient depth of water on the bar to admit the safe passage of the largest ships, one of which carried 80 and another 90 guns: the attempt, therefore, was reluctantly abandoned; and the ships anchored about four miles off, near Shrewsbury on the Jersey coast, taking in provisions and water.

The enterprise which the American and French commanders deemed next worthy of a combined operation, was the recapture of Rhode Island proper, that is to say, the island which gives its name to the State, and which the enemy had made one of their military depots and strongholds. In anticipation of such an enterprise Washington on the 17th of July wrote to General Sullivan, who commanded at Providence, ordering him to make the necessary preparations for a descent from the mainland upon the island, and authorizing him to call in reinforcements of New England militia. He subsequently sent to his aid the Marquis Lafayette with two brigades (Varnum's and Glover's). Quartermaster-General Greene also was detached for the service, being a native of the island, well acquainted with its

localities, and having great influence among its inhabitants. Sullivan was instructed to form his whole force, Continental, State and militia, into two equal divisions, one to be commanded by Greene, the other by Lafayette.

On the 22d of July, the French fleet, having finished taking in its supplies, appeared again in full force off the bar at Sandy Hook. The British, who supposed they had only been waiting on the Shrewsbury coast for the high tides of the latter part of July, now prepared for a desperate conflict; and, indeed, had the French fleet been enabled to enter, it is difficult to conceive a more terrible and destructive struggle than would have ensued between these gallant and deadly rivals, with their powerful armaments brought side to side, and cramped up in so confined a field of action.

D'Estaing, however, had already determined his course. After a few demonstrations off the harbor, he stood away to the eastward, and on the 29th arrived off Point Judith, coming to anchor within five miles of Newport.

Rhode Island (proper), the object of this expedition, is about sixteen miles long, running deep into the great Narraganset Bay. Seaconnet Channel separates it on the east from the mainland, and on the west the main channel passes between it and Conanicut Island.

The town of Newport is situated near the south end of the island, facing the west, with Conanicut Island in front of it. It was protected by batteries and a small naval force. Here General Sir Robert Pigott, who commanded in the island, had his headquarters. The force under him was about six thousand strong, variously posted about the island, some in works at the north end, but the greater part within strongly intrenched lines extending across the island, about three miles from the town. General Greene hastened from Providence on hearing of the arrival of the fleet of Count D'Estaing, and went on board of it at the anchorage to concert a plan of operations. Some questions of etiquette and precedence rose between them in settling the mode in which the attack was to be conducted. It was at length agreed that the fleet should force its way into the harbor at the same time that the Americans approached by land, and that the landing of the troops from the ships on the west side of the island should take place at the same time that the Americans should cross Seaconnet Channel, and land on the east side near the north end. This combined operation was to have been carried promptly into effect, but was postponed until the 10th of August, to give time for the reinforcements sent by

Washington to arrive. The delay was fatal to the enterprise.

On the 8th, the Count D'Estaing entered the harbor and passed up the main channel, exchanging a cannonade with the batteries as he passed, and anchored a little above the town, between Goat and Conanicut Islands. The English, on his approach, burnt or scuttled three frigates and some smaller vessels, which would otherwise have been captured. General Sullivan, to be ready for the concerted attack, had moved down from Providence to the neighborhood of Howland's Ferry, on the east side of Seaconnet passage.

The British troops stationed opposite on the north end of the island, fearful of being cut off, evacuated their works in the night of the 8th, and drew into the lines at Newport.

Sullivan, seeing the works thus abandoned, could not resist the temptation to cross the channel in flat-bottomed boats on the morning of the 9th, and take possession of them.

This sudden movement, a day in advance of the concerted time, and without due notice given to the count, surprised and offended him, clashing with his notions of etiquette and punctilio. He, however, prepared to co-operate, and was ordering out his boats for the purpose, when, about two o'clock in the day,

his attention was called to a great fleet of ships standing toward Newport. It was, in fact, the fleet of Lord Howe. That gallant nobleman had heard of the danger of Newport, and being reinforced by four stout ships, part of a squadron coming out under Admiral Byron, had hastened to its relief; though still inferior in force to the French admiral. The delay of the concerted attack had enabled him to arrive in time. The wind set directly into the harbor. Had he entered promptly, the French would have been placed between two fires, from his ships and the batteries, and cramped up in a confined channel where their largest ships had no room to operate. His lordship, however, merely stood in near the land, communicated with General Pigott, and having informed himself exactly of the situation of the French fleet, came to anchor at Point Judith, some distance from the southwest entrance of the bay.

In the night the wind changed to the northeast. The count hastened to avail himself of the error of the British admiral. Favored by the wind, he stood out of the harbor at eight o'clock in the morning to give the enemy battle where he should have good sea room, previously sending word to General Sullivan, who had advanced the preceding afternoon to Quaker Hill,

about ten miles north of Newport, that he would land his promised troops and marines, and co-operate with him on his return.

The French ships were severely cannonaded as they passed the batteries, but without material damage. Forming in order of battle, they bore down upon the fleet of Lord Howe, confidently anticipating a victory from their superiority of force. The British ships slipt their cables at their approach, and likewise formed in line of battle; but his lordship avoided an encounter while the enemy had the weather-gage. To gain this on the one part, and retain it on the other, the two fleets manœuvred throughout the day, standing to the southward, and gradually disappearing from the anxious eyes of the belligerent forces on Rhode Island.

The army of Sullivan, now left to itself before Newport, amounted to ten thousand men, having received the militia reinforcements. Lafayette advised the delay of hostile operations until the return of D'Estaing, but the American commander, piqued and chagrined at the departure of his allies, determined to commence the siege immediately, without waiting for his tardy aid. On the 12th, however, came on a tempest of wind and rain, which raged for two days and nights with unexampled

violence. Tents were blown down ; several soldiers and many horses perished, and a great part of the ammunition recently dealt out to the troops was destroyed. On the 14th, the weather cleared up and the sun shone brightly, but the army was worn down and dispirited. Had the British troops sallied forth at this juncture hale and fresh from comfortable quarters, it might have fared badly with their weather-beaten besiegers. The latter, however, being unmolested, had time to breathe and refit themselves. The day was passed in drying their clothes, cleaning their arms, and putting themselves in order for action. By the next morning they were again on the alert. Expecting the prompt return of the French, they now took post on Honeyman's Hill, about two miles from the British lines, and began to construct batteries, form lines of communication, and make regular approaches. The British were equally active in strengthening their defenses. There was casual connonading on each side, but nothing of consequence. Several days elapsed without the reappearance of the French. The situation of the besiegers was growing critical, when, on the evening of the 19th, they descried the expected fleet standing toward the harbor. All now was exultation in the camp. Should the French with

their ships and troops attack the town by sea and land on the one side, while the Americans assailed it on the other, the surrender of the place was inevitable.

These sanguine anticipations, however, were short-lived. The French fleet was in a shattered and forlorn condition. After sailing from before Newport, on the 20th, it had manœuvred for two days with the British fleet, each unwilling to enter into action without having the weather-gage. While thus manœuvring, the same furious storm which had raged on shore separated and dispersed them with fearful ravage. Some single encounters of scattered ships subsequently took place, but without definite result. All were too much tempest-tost and disabled to make good fight. Lord Howe with such of his ships as he could collect bore away to New York to refit, and the French admiral was now before Newport, but in no plight or mood for fighting.

In a letter to General Sullivan, he informed him that, pursuant to the orders of his sovereign and the advice of his officers, he was bound for Boston, being instructed to repair to that port, should he meet with misfortune, or a superior British force appear upon the coast.

Dismayed at this intelligence, which threat-

ened ruin and disgrace to the enterprise, Sullivan wrote a letter of remonstrance to the count, and General Greene and the Marquis Lafayette repaired with it on board of the admiral's ship, to enforce it by their personal exertions. They represented to the count the certainty of carrying the place in two days, by a combined attack; and the discouragement and reproach that would follow a failure on this their first attempt at co-operation; an attempt, too, for which the Americans had made such great and expensive preparations, and on which they had indulged such sanguine hopes. These and other considerations equally urgent had their weight with the count, and he was inclined to remain and pursue the enterprise, but was overruled by the principal officers of his fleet. The fact is, that he was properly a land officer, and they had been indignant at his having a nautical command over their heads. They were glad, therefore, of any opportunity to thwart and mortify him; and now insisted on his complying with his letter of instructions, and sailing for Boston. On Lafayette's taking leave, the count assured him that he would only remain in Boston time enough to give his men repose after their long sufferings, and refit his ships; and trusted to leave the port again within three weeks after entering it, "to fight for the

glory of the French name and the interests of America." *

The marquis and General Greene returned at midnight, and made a report of the ill success of their mission. Sullivan sent another letter on the following day, urging D'Estaing in any event to leave his land forces. All the general officers, excepting Lafayette, joined in signing and sending a protest against the departure of the fleet to Boston, as derogatory to the honor of France, contrary to the intention of his most Christian Majesty and the interest of his nation, destructive of the welfare of the United States, and highly injurious to the alliance formed between the two nations. The fleet was already under way when Colonel Laurens got on board of the admiral's ship with the letter and protest. The count was deeply offended by the tone of the protest, and the manner in which it was conveyed to him. He declared to Colonel Laurens that "this paper imposed on the commander of the king's squadron the painful but necessary law of profound silence." He continued his course to Boston.

At the sailing of the ships there was a feeling of exasperation throughout the camp.

* Letter of Lafayette to Washington. *Memoirs*, v. i., p. 194.

Sullivan gave vent to his vexation in a general order on the 24th, wherein he observed: "The general cannot help lamenting the sudden and unexpected departure of the French fleet, as he finds it has a tendency to discourage some who placed great dependence upon the assistance of it; though he can by no means suppose the army, or any part of it, endangered by this movement. He yet hopes the event will prove America able to procure that by her own arms which her allies refuse to assist in obtaining."

On cooler reflection he thought proper, in subsequent orders, to explain away the rash and unwarrantable imputation on French loyalty contained in the foregoing document, but a general feeling of irritation against the French continued to prevail in the army.

As had been foretold, the departure of the fleet was a death-blow to the enterprise. Between two and three thousand volunteers abandoned the camp in the course of four-and-twenty hours; others continued to go off; desertions occurred among the militia, and in a few days the number of besiegers did not exceed that of the besieged.

All thoughts of offensive operations were now at an end. The question was how best to extricate the army from its perilous position.

The harbors of Rhode Island being now free, and open to the enemy, reinforcements might pour in from New York, and render the withdrawal of the troops disastrous, if not impossible. To prepare for rapid retreat, if necessary, all the heavy artillery that could be spared was sent off from the island. On the 28th it was determined, in a council of war, to fall back to the military works at the north end of the island, and fortify there, until it should be known whether the French fleet would soon return to their assistance, the Marquis Lafayette setting off with all speed to have an interview with the Count D'Estaing, and ascertain the fact.

General Sullivan broke up his camp, and commenced his retreat that very night, between nine and ten o'clock, the army retiring by two roads, the rear covered by parties of light troops, under Colonels Livingston and Laurens.

Their retreat was not discovered until daylight, when a pursuit was commenced. The covering parties behaved gallantly, making frequent stands, abandoning one eminence only to take post on another, and keeping up a retreating fire that checked the advance of the enemy. After a series of skirmishes they were pressed back to the fortified grounds on the north end of the island; but Sullivan had already taken post there, on Batt's Hill, the

main body of his army being drawn up in order of battle, with strong works in their rear, and a redoubt in front of the right wing.

The British now took post on an advantageous height called Quaker Hill, a little more than a mile from the American front, whence they commenced a cannonade which was briskly returned. Skirmishing ensued until about ten o'clock, when two British sloops-of-war and some small vessels having gained a favorable position, the enemy's troops, under cover of their fire, advanced in force to turn the right flank of the American army, and capture the redoubt which protected it. This was bravely defended by General Greene: a sharp action ensued, which had nearly become a general one; between two and three hundred men were killed on each side; the British at length drew back to their artillery and works on Quaker Hill, and a mutual cannonade was resumed and kept up until night.

On the following day (29th) the enemy continued his distant firing, but waited for reinforcements before coming to close quarters. In the meantime, General Sullivan had received intelligence that Lord Howe had again put to sea with the design, no doubt, to attempt the relief at Newport; and then followed another report that a fleet of troops was actually off

Block Island, and must arrive almost immediately in the harbor.

Under these circumstances it was determined to abandon Rhode Island. To do so with safety, however, required the utmost caution, as the hostile sentries were within four hundred yards of each other, and any suspicious movements would be easily discovered and reported to the British commander. The position on Batt's Hill favored a deception. Tents were brought forward and pitched in sight of the enemy, and a great part of the troops employed throughout the day in throwing up works, as if the post was to be resolutely maintained; at the same time, the heavy baggage and stores were quietly conveyed away in the rear of the hill, and ferried across the bay. As soon as it was dark the tents were struck, fires were lighted at various points, the troops withdrawn, and in a few hours the whole was transported across the channel to the mainland. In the height of the transit, Lafayette arrived. He had ridden from the island to Boston, a distance of nearly seventy miles, in seven hours, and had conferred with the French admiral.

D'Estaing had convinced him of the inadequacy of his naval force, but had made a spirited offer of leading his troops by land to co-operate with the Americans. Eager to be

in time for any engagement that might take place, Lafayette had spurred back still more speedily than he went, but was disappointed and mortified at finding all the fighting over. He arrived in time, however, to bring off the pickets and covering parties, amounting to a thousand men, which he did in such excellent order, that not a man was left behind, nor the smallest article lost.

The whole army had crossed by two o'clock in the morning unperceived by the enemy, and had reason to congratulate themselves on the course they had taken, and the quickness of their movements; for the very next day Sir Henry Clinton arrived at Newport in a light squadron, with a reinforcement of four thousand men, a naval and land force that might effectually have cut off Sullivan's retreat had he lingered on the island.

Sir Henry, finding that he had arrived a day too late, returned to New York, but first detached Major-General Sir Charles Grey with the troops, on a ravaging expedition to the eastward; chiefly against ports which were the haunts of privateers. This was the same general that had surprised Wayne in the preceding year, and effected such slaughter among his men with the bayonet. He appears to have been fitted for rough and merciless warfare.

In the course of his present expedition he destroyed more than seventy vessels in Acushnet River, some of them privateers with their prizes, others peaceful merchant ships. New Bedford and Fair Haven having been made military and naval depots, were laid waste, wharves demolished, rope-walks, store-houses and mills, with several private dwellings, wrapped in flames. Similar destruction was effected at the Island of Martha's Vineyard, a resort of privateers; where the inhabitants were disarmed, and a heavy contribution levied upon them in sheep and cattle. Having thus ravaged the coasts of New England, the squadron returned laden with inglorious spoil to New York.

Lord Howe, also, who had sailed for Boston, in the hope of intercepting the Count D'Estaing, and had reached there on the 30th of August, found the French fleet safely sheltered in Nantasket Road, and protected by American batteries erected on commanding points. He also returned to New York, and shortly afterward, availing himself of a permission granted him some time before by government, resigned the command of the fleet to Admiral Gambier, to hold it until the arrival of Admiral Byron. His lordship then returned to England, having rendered important services by his operations along the American coast and on the waters

of the Delaware, and presenting a strong contrast, in his incessant activity, to the easy indolence and self-indulgence of his brother.

The failure of the combined enterprise against Rhode Island was a cause of universal chagrin and disappointment, but to none more so than to Washington, as is evident from the following passage of a letter to his brother, John Augustine:

"An unfortunate storm, and some measures taken in consequence of it by the French Admiral, blasted in one moment the fairest hopes that ever were conceived; and, from a moral certainty of success, rendered it a matter of rejoicing to get our own troops safe off the island. If the garrison of that place, consisting of nearly six thousand men, had been captured, as there was, in appearance at least, a hundred to one in favor of it, it would have given the finishing blow to British pretensions of sovereignty over this country; and would, I am persuaded, have hastened the departure of the troops in New York, as fast as their canvas wings would carry them away."

But what gave Washington the greatest solicitude, was the effect of this disappointment upon the public mind. The failure of the enterprise was generally attributed to the departure of the French fleet from Newport, and

there was at one time such popular exasperation, that it was feared the means of repairing the French ships at Boston would be withheld. Count D'Estaing, and the other French officers, on their part, were irritated by the protests of the American officers, and the expressions in Sullivan's general order derogatory to French loyalty. The count addressed a letter to Congress, explaining and vindicating his conduct subsequent to his arrival on the coast.

Washington regarded this mutual irritation which had so suddenly sprung up between the army and the fleet, with the most poignant anxiety. He wrote to Sullivan and Greene on the subject, urging them to suppress the feuds and jealousies which had already arisen, to conceal as much as possible from the soldiery and public, the misunderstandings which had occurred between the officers of the two nations; to discountenance all illiberal or unfriendly observations on the part of the army, and to cultivate the utmost harmony and goodwill.

Congress, also, endeavored to suppress the protest of the officers of Sullivan's army which had given so much offense; and, in a public resolution, expressed their perfect approbation of the conduct of the count, and their sense of his zeal and attachment.

Nothing perhaps tended more to soothe his wounded sensibilities, than a letter from Washington, couched in the most delicate and considerate language. "If the deepest regret, that the best concerted enterprise and bravest exertions should have been rendered fruitless by a disaster, which human prudence was incapable of foreseeing or preventing, can alleviate disappointment, you may be assured that the whole continent sympathizes with you. It will be a consolation for you to reflect, that the thinking part of mankind do not form their judgment from events; and that their equity will ever attach equal glory to those actions which deserve success, and those which have been crowned with it. It is in the trying circumstances to which your Excellency has been exposed, that the virtues of a great mind are displayed in their brightest lustre, and that a general's character is better known than in the hour of victory. It was yours, by every title which can give it; and the adverse element, which robbed you of your prize, can never deprive you of the glory due to you."

Chapter XIII.

Indian Warfare—Desolation of the Valley of Wyoming—Movements in New York—Counter-Movements of Washington—Foraging Parties of the Enemy—Baylor's Dragoons Massacred at Old Tappan—British Expedition against Little Egg Harbor—Massacre of Pulaski's Infantry—Retaliation of Donop's Rangers—Arrival of Admiral Byron—Endeavors to Entrap D'Estaing, but is Disappointed—Expedition against St. Lucia—Expedition against Georgia—Capture of Savannah—Georgia Subdued—General Lincoln Sent to Command in the South.

WHILE hostilities were carried on in the customary form along the Atlantic borders, Indian warfare, with all its atrocity, was going on in the interior. The British post at Niagara was its cradle. It was the common rallying-place of tories, refugees, savage warriors, and other desperadoes of the frontiers. Hither Brant, the noted Indian chief, had retired after the repulse of St. Leger at Fort Schuyler, to plan

further mischief; and here was concerted the memorable incursion into the Valley of Wyoming, suggested by tory refugees, who had until recently inhabited it.

The Valley of Wyoming is a beautiful region lying along the Susquehanna. Peaceful as was its aspect, it had been the scene of sanguinary feuds prior to the Revolution, between the people of Pennsylvania and Connecticut, who both laid claim to it. Seven rural forts or blockhouses, situated on various parts of the valley, had been strongholds during these territorial contests, and remained as places of refuge for women and children in times of Indian ravage.

The expedition now set on foot against it, in June, was composed of Butler's rangers, Johnson's Royal Greens, and Brant, with his Indian braves. Their united force, about eleven hundred strong, was conducted by Colonel John Butler, renowned in Indian warfare. Passing down the Chemung and Susquehanna in canoes, they landed at a place called Three Islands, struck through the wilderness to a gap or "notch" of the mountains, by which they entered the Valley of Wyoming. Butler made his headquarters at one of the strongholds already mentioned, called Wintermoot's Fort, from a tory family of the same name.

Hence he sent out his marauding parties to plunder and lay waste the country.

Rumors of this intended invasion had reached the valley some time before the appearance of the enemy, and had spread great consternation. Most of the sturdy yeomanry were absent in the army. A company of sixty men, enlisted under an act of Congress, and hastily and imperfectly organized, yet styling themselves regulars, took post at one of the strongholds called Forty Fort; where they were joined by about three hundred of the most efficient of the yeomanry, armed and equipped in rude rustic style. In this emergency old men and boys volunteered to meet the common danger, posting themselves in the smaller forts in which women and children had taken refuge. Colonel Zebulon Butler, an officer of the Continental Army, took the general command. Several officers arrived from the army, having obtained leave to repair home for the protection of their families. They brought word that a reinforcement, sent by Washington, was on its way.

In the meantime the marauding parties sent out by Butler and Brant were spreading desolation through the valley; farm-houses were wrapped in flames; husbandmen were murdered while at work in the fields; all who had

The Wyoming Valley.

Redrawn from an old engraving.

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not taken refuge in the fort were threatened with destruction. What was to be done? Wait for the arrival of the promised reinforcement, or attempt to check the ravage? The latter was rashly determined on.

Leaving the women and children in Forty Fort, Colonel Zebulon Butler with his men sallied forth on the 3d of July, and made a rapid move upon Wintermoot Fort, hoping to come upon it by surprise. They found the enemy drawn up in front of it, in a line extending from the river to a marsh; Colonel John Butler and his rangers, with Johnson's Royal Greens, on the left; Indians and tories on the right.

The Americans formed a line of the same extent; the regulars under Colonel Butler on the right flank, resting on the river, the militia under Colonel Denison on the left wing, on the marsh. A sharp fire was opened from right to left; after a few volleys the enemy in front of Colonel Butler began to give way. The Indians, however, throwing themselves into the marsh, turned the left flank of the Americans, and attacked the militia in the rear. Denison, finding himself exposed to a cross fire, sought to change his position, and gave the word to fall back. It was mistaken for an order to retreat. In an instant the left wing turned and

fled; all attempts to rally it were vain; the panic extended to the right wing. The savages, throwing down their rifles, rushed on with tomahawk and scalping-knife, and a horrible massacre ensued. Some of the Americans escaped to Forty Fort, some swam the river; others broke their way across the swamp, and climbed the mountain: some few were taken prisoners; but the greater number were slaughtered.

The desolation of the valley was now completed; fields were laid waste, houses burnt, and their inhabitants murdered. According to the British accounts, upwards of four hundred of the yeomanry of Wyoming were slain, but the women and children were spared, "and desired to retire to their rebel friends." *

Upwards of five thousand persons, says the same account, fled in the utmost distress and consternation, seeking refuge in the settlements on the Lehigh and the Delaware. After completing this horrible work of devastation, the enemy retired before the arrival of the troops detached by Washington.

We might have swelled our narrative of this affair by many individual acts of atrocity committed by royalists on their old friends and neighbors, and even their near relatives; but

* *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1778, p. 545.

we forbear to darken our page by such stigmas on human nature. Suffice it to say, it was one of the most atrocious outrages perpetrated throughout the war; and, as usual, the tories concerned in it were the most vindictive and merciless of the savage crew. Of the measures taken in consequence we shall speak hereafter.

For a great part of the summer, Washington had remained encamped at White Plains, watching the movements of the enemy at New York. Early in September he observed a great stir of preparation; cannon and military stores were embarked, and a fleet of one hundred and forty transports were ready to make sail. What was their destination? Washington deplored the facility possessed by the enemy of transporting their troops from point to point by sea. "Their rapid movements," said he, "enable them to give us solicitude for the safety of remote points, to succor which we should have to make ruinous marches, and after all, perhaps, find ourselves the dupes of a feint."

There were but two capital objects which they could have in view, beside the defeat and dispersion of his army. One was to get possession of the forts and passes of the Highlands; the other, by a junction of their land and naval forces, to attempt the destruction of

the French fleet at Boston, and regain possession of that town. These points were so far asunder, that it was difficult to protect the one, without leaving the other exposed. To do the best that the nature of the case would admit, Washington strengthened the works and reinforced the garrison in the Highlands, stationed Putnam with two brigades in the neighborhood of West Point. General Gates was sent with three brigades to Danbury in Connecticut, where he was joined by two brigades under General McDougall, while Washington moved his camp to a rear position at Fredericksburg on the borders of Connecticut, and about thirty miles from West Point, so as to be ready for a movement to the eastward or a speedy junction for the defense of the Hudson. To facilitate an eastern movement, he took measures to have all the roads leading to Boston repaired.

Scarce had Washington moved from White Plains, when Sir Henry Clinton threw a detachment of five thousand men under Lord Cornwallis into the Jerseys, between the Hackensack and Hudson Rivers, and another of three thousand under Knyphausen into Westchester County, between the Hudson and the Bronx. These detachments held communication with each other, and by the aid of flat-bottomed boats could unite their forces, in

twenty-four hours, on either side of the Hudson.

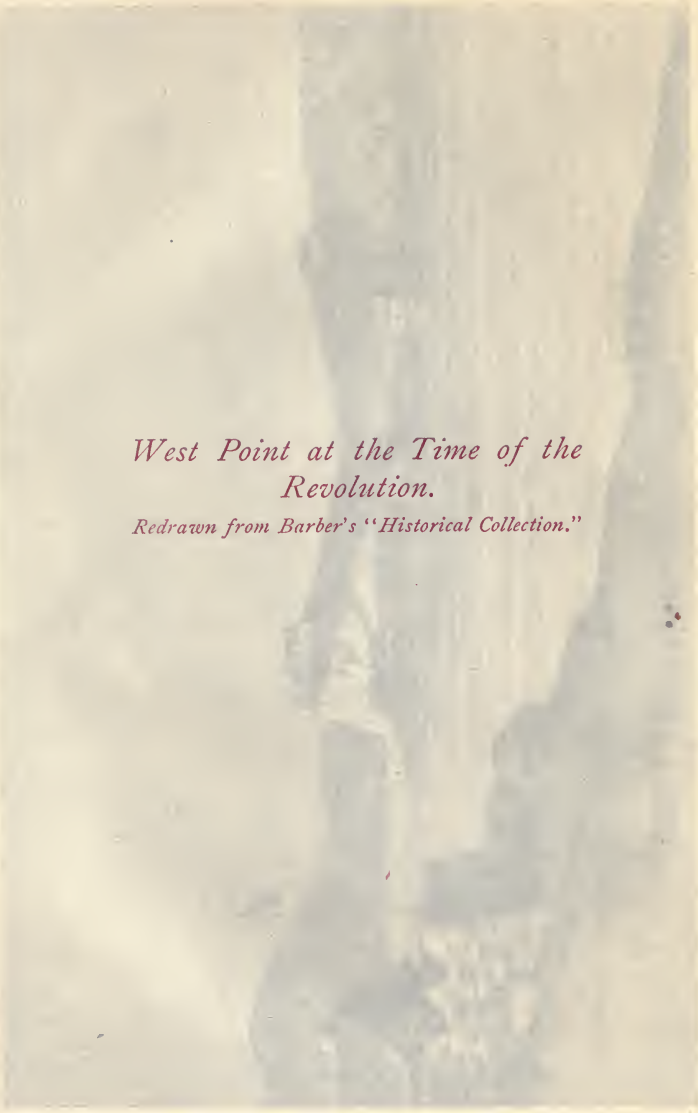
Washington considered these mere foraging expeditions, though on a large scale, and detached troops into the Jerseys, to co-operate with the militia in checking them; but, as something more might be intended, he ordered General Putnam to cross the river to West Point, for its immediate security: while he himself moved with a division of his army to Fishkill.

Wayne, who was with the detachment in the Jerseys, took post with a body of militia and a regiment of light horse in front of the division of Lord Cornwallis. The militia were quartered at the village of New Tappan; but Lieutenant-Colonel Baylor, who commanded the light horse, chose to encamp apart, to be free, as is supposed, from the control of Wayne. He took up his quarters, therefore, in Old Tappan, where his men lay very negligently and unguardedly in barns. Cornwallis had intelligence of their exposed situation, and laid a plan to cut off the whole detachment. A body of troops from Knyphausen's division was to cross the Hudson in the night, and come by surprise upon the militia in New Tappan: at the same time, Major-General Grey, of marauding renown, was to advance

on the left, and attack Baylor and his dragoons in their careless quarters in Old Tappan.

Fortunately Knyphausen's troops, led by Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell, were slow in crossing the river, and the militia were apprised by deserters of their danger in time to escape. Not so with Baylor's party. General Grey having cut off a sergeant's patrol, advanced in silence, and surrounded with his troops three barns in which the dragoons were sleeping. We have seen, in his surprise of Wayne's detachment in the preceding year, how stealthy and effective he was in the work of destruction. To prevent noise he had caused his men to draw the charges and take the flints from their guns, and fix their bayonets. The bayonet was his favorite weapon. With this his men rushed forward, and, deaf for a time to all cries for mercy, made a savage slaughter of naked and defenseless men. Eleven were killed on the spot, and twenty-five mangled, with repeated thrusts, some receiving ten, twelve, and sixteen wounds. Among the wounded were Colonel Baylor and Major Clough, the last of whom soon died. About forty were taken prisoners, mostly through the humane interposition of one of Grey's captains, whose feelings revolted at the orders of his sanguinary commander.

This whole movement of troops, on both



West Point at the Time of the Revolution.

Redrawn from Barber's "Historical Collection."

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This whole movement of troops, on both

sides of the Hudson, was designed to cover an expedition against Little Egg Harbor, on the east coast of New Jersey, a noted rendezvous of American privateers. It was conducted in much the same spirit with that of General Grey to the eastward. Three hundred regular troops, and a body of royalist volunteers from the Jerseys, headed by Captain Patrick Ferguson, embarked at New York on board galleys and transports, and made for Little Egg Harbor under convoy of vessels of war. They were long at sea. The country heard of their coming; four privateers put to sea and escaped; others took refuge up the river. The wind prevented the transports from entering. The troops embarked in row galleys and small craft, and pushed twenty miles up the river to the village of Chestnut Neck. Here were batteries, without guns, prize ships which had been hastily scuttled, and store-houses for the reception of prize goods. The batteries and store-houses were demolished, the prize ships burnt, saltworks destroyed and private dwellings sacked and laid in ashes; all, it was pretended, being the property of persons concerned in privateering, or "whose activity in the cause of America and unrelenting persecution of the loyalists, marked them out as the proper objects of vengeance." As those persons were

pointed out by the tory volunteers of New Jersey who accompanied the expedition, we may suppose how far private pique and neighborly feud entered into these proscriptions.

The vessels which brought this detachment being wind-bound for several days, Captain Ferguson had time for another enterprise. Among the forces detached by Washington into the Jerseys to check these ravages, was the Count Pulaski's legionary corps, composed of three companies of foot, and a troop of horse, officered principally by foreigners. A deserter from the corps brought word to the British commander that the legion was cantoned about twelve miles up the river; the infantry in three houses by themselves; Count Pulaski with the cavalry at some distance apart.

Informed of these circumstances, Captain Ferguson embarked in boats with two hundred and fifty men, ascended the river in the night, landed at four in the morning, and surrounded the houses in which the infantry were sleeping. "It being a night attack," says the captain in his official report, "little quarter of course could be given, *so there were only five prisoners.*" It was indeed a massacre similar to those of the bayonet-loving General Grey. Fifty of the infantry were butchered on the spot; among whom were two of the foreign offi-

cers, the Baron de Bose and Lieutenant de la Broderie.

The clattering of hoofs gave note of the approach of Pulaski and his horse, whereupon the British made a rapid retreat to their boats and pulled down the river, and thus ended the marauding expedition of Captain Ferguson, worthy of the times of the buccaneers. He attempted afterwards to excuse his wanton butchery of unarmed men, by alleging that the deserter from Pulaski's legion told him the count, in his general orders, forbade all granting of quarters; information which proved to be false, and which, had he been a gentleman of honorable spirit, he never would have believed, especially on the word of a deserter.

The detachment on the east side of the Hudson likewise made a predatory and disgraceful foray from their lines at King's Bridge, towards the American encampment at White Plains, plundering the inhabitants without discrimination, not only of their provisions and forage, but of the very clothes on their backs. None were more efficient in this ravage than a party of about one hundred of Captain Donop's Hessian yagers, and they were in full maraud between Tarrytown and Dobbs Ferry, when a detachment of infantry under Colonel Richard Butler, and of cavalry under Major Henry Lee,

came upon them by surprise, killed ten of them on the spot, captured a lieutenant and eighteen privates, and would have taken or destroyed the whole, had not the extreme roughness of the country impeded the action of the cavalry, and enabled the yagers to escape by scrambling up hillsides or plunging into ravines. This occurred but three days after the massacre of Colonel Baylor's party, on the opposite side of the Hudson.

The British detachments having accomplished the main objects of their movements, returned to New York, leaving those parts of the country they had harassed still more determined in their hostility, having achieved nothing but what is least honorable and most detestable in warfare. We need no better comment on these measures than one furnished by a British writer of the day. "Upon the whole," observes he, "even if the treaty between France and America had not rendered all hope of success from the present conciliatory system hopeless, these predatory and irritating expeditions would have appeared peculiarly ill-timed and unlucky. Though strongly and warmly recommended by many here as the most effectual mode of war, we scarcely remember an instance in which they have not been more mischievous than useful to the

grand objects of either reducing or reconciling the provinces." *

We may add here that General Grey, who had most signalized himself in these sanguinary exploits, and who from his stealthy precaution to insure the use of the bayonet, had acquired the surname of "No Flint," was rewarded for a long career of military services by being raised to the peerage as Lord Grey of Howick, ultimately Earl Grey. He was father of the celebrated prime minister of that name.

About the middle of September Admiral Byron arrived at New York with the residue of the scattered armament, which had sailed from England in June to counteract the designs of the Count D'Estaing. Finding that the count was still repairing his shattered fleet in the harbor of Boston, he put to sea again as soon as his ships were refitted, and set sail for that port to entrap him. Success seemed likely to crown his schemes: he arrived off Boston on the 1st of November: his rival was still in port. Scarce had the admiral entered the bay, however, when another violent storm drove him out to sea, disabled his ships, and compelled him to put into Rhode Island to refit. Meanwhile the count having his ships in good order, and find-

* *Ann. Register*, 1778, p. 215.

ing the coast clear, put to sea, and made the best of his way for the West Indies. Previous to his departure he issued a proclamation dated the 28th of October, addressed to the French inhabitants of Canada, inviting them to resume allegiance to their former sovereign. This was a measure in which he was not authorized by instructions from his government, and which was calculated to awaken a jealousy in the American mind as to the ultimate views of France in taking a part in this contest. It added to the chagrin occasioned by the failure of the expedition against Rhode Island, and the complete abandonment by the French of the coasts of the United States.

The force at New York, which had been an object of watchful solicitude, was gradually dispersed in different directions. Immediately after the departure of Admiral Byron for Boston, another naval expedition had been set on foot by Sir Henry Clinton. All being ready, a fleet of transports with five thousand men, under General Grant, convoyed by Commodore Hotham with a squadron of six ships of war, set sail on the third of November, with the secret design of an attack on St. Lucia.

Towards the end of the same month, another body of troops, under Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell, sailed for Georgia in the squadron of

Commodore Hyde Parker, the British cabinet having determined to carry the war into the Southern States. At the same time General Prevost, who commanded in Florida, was ordered by Sir Henry Clinton to march to the banks of the Savannah River, and attack Georgia in flank, while the expedition under Campbell should attack it in front on the sea-board. We will briefly note the issue of these enterprises, so far beyond Washington's control.

The squadron of Commodore Hyde Parker anchored in the Savannah River towards the end of December. An American force of about six hundred regulars, and a few militia, under General Robert Howe, were encamped near the town, being the remnant of an army with which that officer had invaded Florida in the preceding summer, but had been obliged to evacuate it by a mortal malady which desolated his camp.

Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell landed his troops on the 29th of December, about three miles below the town. The whole country bordering the river is a deep morass, cut up by creeks, and only to be traversed by causeways. Over one of these, six hundred yards in length, with a ditch on each side, Colonel Campbell advanced, putting to flight a small party

stationed to guard it. General Howe had posted his little army on the main road with the river on his left and a morass in front. A negro gave Campbell information of a path leading through the morass, by which troops might get unobserved to the rear of the Americans. Sir James Baird was detached with the light infantry by this path, while Colonel Campbell advanced in front. The Americans, thus suddenly attacked in front and rear, were completely routed; upwards of one hundred were either killed on the spot, or perished in the morass; thirty-eight officers and four hundred and fifteen privates were taken prisoners, and the rest retreated up the Savannah River and crossed into South Carolina. Savannah, the capital of Georgia, was taken possession of by the victors, with cannon, military stores, and provisions; their loss was only seven killed and nineteen wounded.

Colonel Campbell conducted himself with great moderation; protecting the persons and property of the inhabitants, and proclaiming security and favor to all that should return to their allegiance. Numbers in consequence flocked to the British standard; the lower part of Georgia was considered as subdued, and posts were established by the British to maintain possession.

While Colonel Campbell had thus invaded Georgia in front, General Prevost, who commanded the British forces in Florida, had received orders from Sir Henry Clinton to take it in flank. He accordingly traversed deserts to its southern frontier, took Sunbury, the only remaining fort of importance, and marched to Savannah, where he assumed the general command, detaching Colonel Campbell against Augusta. By the middle of January (1779) all Georgia was reduced to submission.

A more experienced American general than Howe had by this time arrived to take command of the Southern Department—Major-General Lincoln, who had gained such reputation in the campaign against Burgoyne, and whose appointment to this station had been solicited by the delegates from South Carolina and Georgia. He had received his orders from Washington in the beginning of October. Of his operations at the South we shall have occasion to speak hereafter.

Chapter XIV.

Winter Cantonments of the American Army—Washington at Middlebrook—Plan of Alarm Signals for the Jerseys—Lafayette's Project for an Invasion of Canada—Favored by Congress—Condemned by Washington—Relinquished—Washington in Philadelphia—The War Spirit Declining—Dissensions in Congress—Sectional Feelings—Patriotic Appeals of Washington—Plans for the Next Campaign—Indian Atrocities to be Repressed—Avenging Expedition Set on Foot—Discontents of the Jersey Troops—Appeased by the Interference of Washington—Successful Campaign against the Indians.

ABOUT the beginning of December, Washington distributed his troops for the winter in a line of strong cantonments extending from Long Island Sound to the Delaware. General Putnam commanded at Danbury, General McDougall in the Highlands, while the headquarters of the commander-in-chief were near Middlebrook in the Jerseys. The objects of this arrangement were

the protection of the country, the security of the important posts on the Hudson, and the safety, discipline, and easy subsistence of the army.

In the course of this winter he devised a plan of alarm signals, which General Philemon Dickinson was employed to carry into effect. On Bottle Hill, which commanded a vast map of country, sentinels kept watch day and night. Should there be an irruption of the enemy, an eighteen-pounder, called the Old Sow, fired every half hour, gave the alarm in the day-time or in dark and stormy nights; an immense fire or beacon at other times. On the booming of that heavy gun, lights sprang up from hill to hill along the different ranges of heights; the country was aroused, and the yeomanry, hastily armed, hurried to their gathering places.

Washington was now doomed to experience great loss in the narrow circle of those about him, on whose attachment and devotion he could place implicit reliance. The Marquis Lafayette, seeing no immediate prospect of active employment in the United States, and anticipating a war on the continent of Europe, was disposed to return to France to offer his services to his sovereign; desirous, however, of preserving a relation with America, he merely solicited from Congress the liberty of

going home for the next winter; engaging himself not to depart until certain that the campaign was over. Washington backed his application for a furlough, as an arrangement that would still link him with the service; expressing his reluctance to part with an officer who united "to all the military fire of youth an uncommon maturity of judgment." Congress in consequence granted the marquis an unlimited leave of absence, to return to America whenever he should find it convenient.

The marquis, in truth, was full of a grand project for the following summer's campaign, which he was anxious to lay before the cabinet of Versailles; it was to effect the conquest of Canada by the combined forces, naval and military, of France and the United States. Of course it embraced a wide scope of operations. One body of American troops was to be directed against Detroit; another against Niagara; a third was to seize Oswego, launch a flotilla, and get command of Lake Ontario; and a fourth to penetrate Canada by the river St. Francis, and secure Montreal and the posts on Lake Champlain. While the Americans thus invaded Upper Canada, a French fleet with five thousand men was to ascend the St. Lawrence, and make an attack on Quebec. The scheme met the approbation of a great

majority in Congress, who ordered it to be communicated to Dr. Franklin, then minister at Paris, to be laid by him before the French cabinet. Previous to a final determination, the House prudently consulted the opinion of the commander-in-chief. Washington opposed the scheme, both by letter and in a personal interview, with Congress, as too complicated and extensive, and requiring too great resources in men and money to be undertaken with a prospect of success. He opposed it also on political grounds. Though it had apparently originated in a proposition of the Marquis Lafayette, it might have had its birth in the French cabinet, with a view to some ulterior object. He suggested the danger of introducing a large body of French troops into Canada, and putting them in possession of the capital of a province attached to them by all the ties of blood, habits, manners, religion, and former connection of government. "Let us realize for a moment," said he, "the striking advantages France would derive from the possession of Canada; an extensive territory, abounding in supplies for the use of her islands; a vast source of the most beneficial commerce with the Indian nations, which she might then monopolize; ports of her own on this continent independent of the precarious good-will of an

ally; the whole trade of Newfoundland whenever she pleased to engross it, the finest nursery for seamen in the world; and finally, the facility of awing and controlling these States, the natural and most formidable rival of every maritime power in Europe." All these advantages he feared might prove too great a temptation to be resisted by any power actuated by the common maxims of national policy; and, with all his confidence in the favorable sentiments of France, he did not think it politic to subject her disinterestedness to such a trial. "To waive every other consideration," said he, grandly, in the conclusion of a letter to the President of Congress, "I do not like to add to the number of our national obligations. I would wish, as much as possible, to avoid giving a foreign power new claims of merit for services performed to the United States, and would ask no assistance that is not indispensable."

The strenuous and far-seeing opposition of Washington was at length effectual: and the magnificent, but hazardous scheme, was entirely, though slowly and reluctantly abandoned. It appears since, that the cabinet of France had really no hand either in originating or promoting it; but, on the contrary, was opposed to any expedition against Canada;

and the instructions to their minister forbade him to aid in any such scheme of conquest.

Much of the winter was passed by Washington in Philadelphia, occupied in devising and discussing plans for the campaign of 1779. It was an anxious moment with him. Circumstances which inspired others with confidence, filled him with solicitude. The alliance with France had produced a baneful feeling of security, which, it appeared to him, was paralyzing the energies of the country. England, it was thought, would now be too much occupied in securing her position in Europe, to increase her force or extend her operations in America. Many, therefore, considered the war as virtually at an end; and were unwilling to make the sacrifices, or supply the means necessary for important military undertakings.

Dissensions, too, and party feuds were breaking out in Congress, owing to the relaxation of that external pressure of a common and imminent danger, which had heretofore produced a unity of sentiment and action. That august body had, in fact, greatly deteriorated since the commencement of the war. Many of those whose names had been as watchwords at the Declaration of Independence, had withdrawn from the national councils; occupied either by their individual affairs, or by the

affairs of their individual States. Washington, whose comprehensive patriotism embraced the whole Union, deprecated and deplored the dawning of this sectional spirit. America, he declared, had never stood in more imminent need of the wise, patriotic, and spirited exertions of her sons than at this period. The States, separately, were too much engaged in their local concerns, and had withdrawn too many of their ablest men from the general council, for the good of the common weal. "Our political system," observed he, "is like the mechanism of a clock; it is useless to keep the smaller wheels in order, if the greater one, the prime mover of the whole, is neglected." It was his wish, therefore, that each State should not only choose, but absolutely compel its ablest men to attend Congress, instructed to investigate and reform public abuses.

Nothing can exceed his appeal to the patriotism of his native State, Virginia, in a letter to Colonel Harrison, the speaker of its House of Delegates, written on the 30th of December: "Our affairs are in a more distressed, ruinous, and deplorable condition than they have been since the commencement of the war. By a faithful laborer, then, in the cause; by a man who is daily injuring his private estate without the smallest earthly advantage, not common

to all in case of a favorable issue to the dispute; by one who wishes the prosperity of America most devoutly, but sees it, or thinks he sees it, on the brink of ruin; you are besought most earnestly, my dear Colonel Harrison, to exert yourself in endeavoring to rescue your country, by sending your best and ablest men to Congress. These characters must not slumber nor sleep at home in such a time of pressing danger. They must not content themselves with the enjoyment of places of honor or profit in their own state, while the common interests of America are mouldering and sinking into irretrievable ruin. . . . If I were to be called upon to draw a picture of the times and of men, from what I have seen, heard, and in part know, I should in one word say, that idleness, dissipation, and extravagance seem to have laid fast hold of most of them; that speculation, peculation, and an insatiable thirst for riches, seem to have got the better of every other consideration, and almost of every order of men; that party disputes and personal quarrels are the great business of the day; while the momentous concerns of an empire, a great and accumulating debt, ruined finances, depreciated money, and want of credit, which in its consequences is the want of everything, are but secondary considerations, and post-

poned from day to day, from week to week, as if our affairs wore the most promising aspect. . . . In the present situation of things, I cannot help asking where are Mason, Wythe, Jefferson, Nicholas, Pendleton, Nelson, and another I could name? And why, if you are sufficiently impressed with your danger, do you not, as New York has done in the case of Mr. Jay, send an extra member or two, for at least a limited time, till the great business of the nation is put upon a more respectable and happy establishment? . . . I confess to you I feel more real distress on account of the present appearance of things, than I have done at any one time since the commencement of the dispute."

Nothing seems to have disgusted him more during his visit to Philadelphia, than the manner in which the concerns of the patriot camp were forgotten amid the revelry of the capital. "An assembly, a concert, a dinner, a supper, that will cost three or four hundred pounds, will not only take off men from acting in this business, but even from thinking of it; while a great part of the officers of our army, from absolute necessity, are quitting the service, and the more virtuous few, rather than do this, are sinking by sure degrees into beggary and want."

In discussing the policy to be observed in the next campaign, Washington presumed the enemy would maintain their present posts, and conduct the war as heretofore; in which case he was for remaining entirely on the defensive; with the exception of such minor operations as might be necessary to check the ravages of the Indians. The country, he observed, was in a languid and exhausted state, and had need of repose. The interruption to agricultural pursuits, and the many hands abstracted from husbandry by military service, had produced a scarcity of bread and forage, and rendered it difficult to subsist large armies. Neither was it easy to recruit these armies. There was abundance of employment; wages were high, the value of money was low; consequently there was but little temptation to enlist. Plans had been adopted to remedy the deranged state of the currency, but they would be slow in operation. Great economy must in the meantime be observed in the public expenditure.

The participation of France in the war, also, and the prospect that Spain would soon be embroiled with England, must certainly divide the attention of the enemy, and allow America a breathing time; these and similar considerations were urged by Washington in favor of a

defensive policy. One single exception was made by him. The horrible ravages and massacres perpetrated by the Indians and their tory allies at Wyoming, had been followed by similar atrocities at Cherry Valley, in the State of New York, and called for signal vengeance to prevent a repetition. Washington knew by experience that Indian warfare, to be effective, should never be merely defensive, but must be carried into the enemy's country. The Six Nations, the most civilized of the savage tribes, had proved themselves the most formidable. His idea was to make war upon them in their own style; penetrate their country, lay waste their villages and settlements, and at the same time destroy the British post at Niagara, that nestling place of tories and refugees.

The policy thus recommended was adopted by Congress. An expedition was set on foot to carry that part relative to the Indians into execution: but here a circumstance occurred, which Washington declared gave him more pain than anything that had happened in the war. A Jersey brigade being ordered to march, the officers of the first regiment hesitated to obey. By the depreciation of paper money, their pay was incompetent to their support; it was, in fact, merely nominal; the conse-

quence was, as they alleged, that they were loaded with debt, and their families at home were starving; yet the Legislature of their State turned a deaf ear to their complaints. Thus aggrieved, they addressed a remonstrance to the Legislature on the subject of their pay, intimating that, should it not receive the immediate attention of that body, they might, at the expiration of three days, be considered as having resigned, and other officers might be appointed in their place.

Here was one of the many dilemmas which called for the judgment, moderation, and great personal weight and influence of Washington. He was eminently the soldier's friend, but he was no less thoroughly the patriot general. He knew and felt the privations and distresses of the army, and the truth of the grievances complained of; but he saw, also, the evil consequences that might result from such a course as that which the officers had adopted. Acting, therefore, as a mediator, he corroborated the statements of the complainants on the one hand, urging on government the necessity of a more general and adequate provision for the officers of the army, and the danger of subjecting them to too severe and continued privations. On the other hand, he represented to the officers the difficulties with which govern-

ment itself had to contend from a deranged currency and exhausted resources; and the unavoidable delays that consequently impeded its moneyed operations. He called upon them, therefore, for a further exertion of that patience and perseverance which had hitherto done them the highest honor at home and abroad, had inspired him with unlimited confidence in their virtue, and consoled him amidst every perplexity and reverse of fortune to which the national affairs had been exposed. "Now that we have made so great a progress to the attainment of the end we have in view," observed he, "anything like a change of conduct would imply a very unhappy change of principle, and a forgetfulness, as well of what we owe to ourselves, as to our country. Did I suppose it possible this could be the case even in a single regiment of the army, I should be mortified and chagrined beyond expression. I should feel it as a wound given to my own honor, which I consider as embarked with that of the army at large.

"But the gentlemen," adds he, "cannot be in earnest; they cannot seriously intend anything that would be a stain on their former reputation. They have only reasoned wrong about the means of obtaining a good end; and on consideration, I hope and flatter myself they will renounce what must appear to be improper.

At the opening of a campaign, when under marching orders for an important service, their own honor, duty to the public and to themselves, and a regard to military propriety, will not suffer them to persist in a measure which would be a violation of them all. It will even wound their delicacy, coolly to reflect that they have hazarded a step which has an air of dictating to their country, by taking advantage of the necessity of the moment; for the declaration they have made to the State, at so critical a time, that unless they obtain relief in the short period of three days, they must be considered out of the service, has very much that aspect."

These and other observations of similar purport, were contained in a letter to General Maxwell, their commander, to be laid before the officers. It produced a respectful reply, but one which intimated no disposition to swerve from their determination. After reiterating their grievances, "we are sorry," added they, "that you should imagine we meant to disobey orders. It was and is still our determination to march with our regiment, and to do the duty of officers until the Legislature shall have a reasonable time to appoint others, but no longer. We beg leave to assure your Excellency, that we have the highest

sense of your ability and virtues; that executing your orders has ever given us pleasure; that we love the service, and love our country; —but when that country gets so lost to virtue and justice, as to forget to support its servants, it then becomes their duty to retire from its service."

A commander of less magnanimity than Washington, would have answered this letter by a stern exercise of military rule, and driven the really aggrieved parties to extremity. He nobly contented himself with the following comment on it, forming a paragraph of a letter to General Maxwell. "I am sorry the gentlemen persist in the principles which dictated the step they have taken; as, the more the affair unfolds itself, the more reason I see to disapprove it. But in the present view they have of the matter, and with their present feelings, it is not probable any new argument that could be offered would have more influence than the former. While, therefore, the gentlemen continue in the execution of their duty, as they declare themselves heartily disposed to do, I shall only regret that they have taken a step of which they must hereafter see the impropriety."

The Legislature of New Jersey imitated the forbearance of Washington. Compounding

with their pride, they let the officers know that on their withdrawing the memorial, the subject-matter of it would be promptly attended to. It was withdrawn. Resolutions were immediately passed, granting pecuniary supplies to both officers and soldiers. The money was forthwith forwarded to camp, and the brigade marched.

Such was the paternal spirit exercised by Washington, in all the difficulties and discontents of the army. How clearly he understood the genius and circumstances of the people he was called upon to manage; and how truly was he their protector even more than their commander!

We shall briefly dispose of the Indian campaign. The first act was an expedition from Fort Schuyler by Colonel Van Schaick, Lieutenant-Colonel Willett, and Major Cochran, with about six hundred men, who, on the 19th of April, surprised the towns of the Onondagas; destroyed the whole settlement, and returned to the fort without the loss of a single man.

The great expedition of the campaign, however, was in revenge of the massacre of Wyoming. Early in the summer, three thousand men assembled in that lately desolated region, and conducted by General Sullivan, moved up the west branch of the Susquehanna into the

Seneca country. While on their way, they were joined by a part of the western army, under General James Clinton, who had come from the valley of the Mohawk by Otsego Lake and the east branch of the Susquehanna. The united forces amounted to about five thousand men, of which Sullivan had the general command.

The Indians, and their allies the tories, had received information of the intended invasion, and appeared in arms to oppose it. They were much inferior in force, however, being about fifteen hundred Indians and two hundred white men, commanded by the two Butlers, Johnson, and Brant. A battle took place at Newtown on the 29th of August, in which they were easily defeated. Sullivan then pushed forward into the heart of the Indian country, penetrating as far as the Genesee River, laying everything waste, setting fire to deserted dwellings, destroying cornfields, orchards, gardens, everything that could give sustenance to man, the design being to starve the Indians out of the country. The latter retreated before him with their families, and at length took refuge under the protection of the British garrison at Niagara. Having completed his errand, Sullivan returned to Easton in Pennsylvania. The thanks of Congress were voted to him and his

army, but he shortly resigned his commission on account of ill health, and retired from the service.

A similiar expedition was undertaken by Colonel Brodhead, from Pittsburg up the Alleghany, against the Mingo, Muncey, and Seneca tribes, with similar results. The wisdom of Washington's policy of carrying the war against the Indians into their country, and conducting it in their own way was apparent from the general intimidation produced among the tribes by these expeditions, and the subsequent infrequency of their murderous incursions; the instigation of which by the British, had been the most inhuman feature of this war.

Chapter XV.

Predatory Warfare of the Enemy—Ravages in the Chesapeake—Hostilities on the Hudson—Verplanck's Point and Stony Point Taken—Capture of New Haven—Fairfield and Norwalk Destroyed—Washington Plans a Counter-Stroke—Storming of Stony Point—Generous Letter of Lee.

THE situation of Sir Henry Clinton must have been mortifying in the extreme to an officer of lofty ambition and generous aims. His force, between sixteen and seventeen thousand strong, was superior in number, discipline, and equipment to that of Washington; yet his instructions confined him to a predatory warfare, carried on by attacks and marauds at distant points, harassing, it is true, yet irritating to the country intended to be conciliated, and brutalizing to his own soldiery. Such was the nature of an expedition set on foot against the commerce of the Chesapeake; by which commerce the armies

were supplied and the credit of the government sustained. On the 9th of May, a squadron under Sir George Collier, convoying transports and galleys, with twenty-five hundred men, commanded by General Mathew, entered these waters, took possession of Portsmouth without opposition, sent out armed parties against Norfolk, Suffolk, Gosport, Kemp's Landing, and other neighboring places, where were immense quantities of provisions, naval and military stores, and merchandise of all kinds; with numerous vessels, some on the stocks, others richly laden. Wherever they went, a scene of plunder, conflagration, and destruction ensued. A few days sufficed to ravage the whole neighborhood.

While this was going on at the South, Washington received intelligence of movements at New York and in its vicinity, which made him apprehend an expedition against the Highlands of the Hudson.

Since the loss of forts Montgomery and Clinton, the main defenses of the Highlands had been established at the sudden bend of the river where it winds between West Point and Constitution Island. Two opposite forts commanded this bend, and an iron chain which was stretched across it.

Washington had projected two works also just below the Highlands, at Stony Point and Verplanck's Point, to serve as outworks on the mountain passes, and to protect King's Ferry, the most direct and convenient communication between the Northern and Middle States.

A small but strong fort had been erected on Verplanck's Point, and was garrisoned by seventy men under Captain Armstrong. A more important work was in progress at Stony Point. When completed, these two forts, on opposite promontories, would form as it were the lower gates of the Highlands; miniature Pillars of Hercules, of which Stony Point was the Gibraltar.

To be at hand in case of any real attempt upon the Highlands, Washington drew up with his forces in that direction; moving by the way of Morristown.

An expedition up the Hudson was really the object of Sir Henry Clinton's movements, and for this he was strengthened by the return of Sir George Collier with his marauding ships and forces from Virginia. On the 30th of May, Sir Henry set out on his second grand cruise up the Hudson, with an armament of about seventy sail, great and small, and one hundred and fifty flat boats. Admiral Sir George Collier commanded the armament, and

there was a land force of about five thousand men under General Vaughan.

The first aim of Sir Henry was to get possession of Stony and Verplanck's Points; his former expedition had acquainted him with the importance of this pass of the river. On the morning of the 31st, the forces were landed in two divisions, the largest under General Vaughan, on the east side of the river, about seven or eight miles below Verplanck's Point; the other, commanded by Sir Henry in person, landed in Haverstraw Bay, about three miles below Stony Point. There were but about thirty men in the unfinished fort; they abandoned it on the approach of the enemy, and retreated into the Highlands, having first set fire to the blockhouse. The British took quiet possession of the fort in the evening; dragged up a cannon and mortars in the night, and at daybreak opened a furious fire upon Fort Lafayette. It was cannonaded at the same time by the armed vessels, and a demonstration was made on it by the division under General Vaughan. Thus surrounded, the little garrison of seventy men was forced to surrender with no other stipulation than safety to their persons and to the property they had in the fort. Major André was aide-de-camp to Sir Henry, and signed the articles of capitulation.

Sir Henry Clinton stationed garrisons in both posts, and set to work with great activity to complete the fortification of Stony Point. His troops remained for several days in two divisions on the opposite sides of the river; the fleet generally fell down a little below King's Ferry; some of the square-rigged vessels, however, with others of a smaller size, and flat-bottomed boats, having troops on board, dropped down Haverstraw Bay, and finally disappeared behind the promontories which advance across the upper part of the Tappan Sea.

Some of the movements of the enemy perplexed Washington exceedingly. He presumed, however, that the main object of Sir Henry was to get possession of West Point, the guardian fortress of the river, and that the capture of Stony and Verplanck's Points were preparatory steps. He would fain have dislodged him from these posts, which cut off all communication by the way of King's Ferry, but they were too strong; he had not the force nor military apparatus necessary. Deferring any attempt on them for the present, he took measures for the protection of West Point. Leaving General Putnam and the main body of the army at Smith's Clove, a mountain pass in the rear of Haverstraw, he removed his headquarters to New Windsor, to be near West

Point in case of need, and to press the completion of its works. General McDougall was transferred to the command of the Point. Three brigades were stationed at different places on the opposite side of the river, under General Heath, from which fatigue parties crossed daily to work on the fortifications.

This strong disposition of the American forces checked Sir Henry's designs against the Highlands. Contenting himself, therefore, for the present, with the acquisition of Stony and Verplanck's Points, he returned to New York; where he soon set on foot a desolating expedition along the seaboard of Connecticut. That State, while it furnished the American armies with provisions and recruits, and infested the sea with privateers, had hitherto experienced nothing of the horrors of war within its borders. Sir Henry, in compliance with his instructions from government, was now about to give it a scourging lesson; and he entertained the hope that, in so doing, he might draw down Washington from his mountain fastnesses, and lay open the Hudson to a successful incursion.

General (late governor) Tryon, was the officer selected by Sir Henry for this inglorious, but apparently congenial service. About the beginning of July he embarked with two thousand six hundred men in a fleet of transports

and tenders, and was convoyed up the Sound by Sir George Collier with two ships of war.

On the 5th of July, the troops landed near New Haven, in two divisions, one led by Tryon, the other by Brigadier-General Garth, his lieutenant. They came upon the neighborhood by surprise; yet the militia assembled in haste, and made a resolute though ineffectual opposition. The British captured the town, dismantled the fort, and took or destroyed all the vessels in the harbor; with all the artillery, ammunition, and public stores. Several private houses were plundered; but this, it was said, was done by the soldiery contrary to orders. The enemy, in fact, claimed great credit for lenity in refraining from universal sackage, considering the opposition they had experienced while on the march, and that some of the inhabitants of the town had fired upon them from the windows.

They next proceeded to Fairfield; where, meeting with greater resistance, they thought the moment arrived for a wholesome example of severity. Accordingly, they not merely ravaged and destroyed the public stores and the vessels in the harbor, but laid the town itself in ashes. The exact return of this salutary lesson gives the destruction of ninety-seven dwelling-houses, sixty-seven barns and

stables, forty-eight store-houses, three places of worship, a court-house, a jail, and two school-houses.

The sight of their homes laid desolate, and their dwellings wrapped in flames, only served to exasperate the inhabitants, and produce a more determined opposition to the progress of the destroyers; whereupon the ruthless ravage of the latter increased as they advanced.

At Norwalk, where they landed on the 11th of July, they burnt one hundred and thirty dwelling-houses, eighty-seven barns, twenty-two store-houses, seventeen shops, four mills, two places of worship, and five vessels which were in the harbor. All this was private property, and the loss fell on individuals engaged in the ordinary occupations of life. These acts of devastation were accompanied by atrocities, inevitable where the brutal passions of the soldiery are aroused. They were unprovoked, too, by any unusual acts of hostility, the militia having no time to assemble, excepting in small parties for the defense of their homes and firesides. The loss of the British throughout the whole expedition amounted, according to their own accounts, to twenty killed, ninety-six wounded, and thirty-two missing.

It was intended to crown this grand ravage by a descent on New London, a noted rendez-

vous of privateers; but as greater opposition was expected there than at either of the other places, the squadron returned to Huntington Bay, on Long Island, to await reinforcements; and Commodore Collier proceeded to Throg's Neck, to confer with Sir Henry Clinton about further operations.

In this conference Sir Henry was assured that the recent expedition was producing the most salutary effects; that of the principal inhabitants were incensed at the apathy of Washington in remaining encamped near the Hudson, while their country was ravaged, and their homes laid in ashes; that they complained equally of Congress, and talked of withdrawing from it their allegiance, and making terms with the British commanders for themselves; finally, it was urged that the proposed expedition against New London would carry these salutary effects still farther, and confirm the inhabitants in the sentiments they were beginning to express.

Such were the delusive representations continually made to the British commanders in the course of this war; or rather, such were the delusions in which they themselves indulged, and which led them to the commission of acts calculated to rend still farther asunder the kindred countries.

Washington, however, was not culpable of the apathy ascribed to him. On hearing of the departure of the expedition to the eastward, and before he was acquainted with its definite object, he detached General Heath, with two brigades of Connecticut militia, to counteract the movements of the enemy. This was all that he could spare from the force stationed for the protection of the Highlands. Any weakening of his posts there might bring the enemy suddenly upon him, such was their facility in moving from one place to another by means of their shipping. Indeed, he had divined that a scheme of the kind was at the bottom of the hostile movement to the eastward.

As a kind of counter-check to Sir Henry, he had for some days been planning the recapture of Stony Point and Fort Lafayette. He had reconnoitered them in person; spies had been thrown into them, and information collected from deserters. Stony Point having been recently strengthened by the British, was now the most important. It was a rocky promontory advancing far into the Hudson, which washed three sides of it. A deep morass, covered at high water, separated it from the mainland, but at low tide might be traversed by a narrow causeway and bridge. The prom-

ontory was crowned by strong works, furnished with heavy ordnance, commanding the morass and causeway. Lower down were two rows of abatis, and the shore at the foot of the hill could be swept by vessels of war anchored in the river. The garrison was about six hundred strong, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Johnson.

To attempt the surprisal of this isolated post, thus strongly fortified, was a perilous enterprise. General Wayne, Mad Anthony as he was called from his daring valor, was the officer to whom Washington proposed it, and he engaged in it with avidity.* According to Washington's plan, it was to be attempted by light infantry only, at night, and with the utmost secrecy, securing every person they met to prevent discovery. Between one and two hundred chosen men and officers were to make the surprise; preceded by a vanguard of prudent, determined men, well commanded, to remove obstructions, secure sentries, and drive in the guards. The whole were to advance with fixed bayonets and unloaded muskets; all was to be done with the bayonet. These

* It is a popular tradition, that when Washington proposed to Wayne the storming of Stony Point, the reply was, "General, I 'll storm h—ll, if *you* will only plan it."

parties were to be followed by the main body, at a small distance, to support and reinforce them, or to bring them off in case of failure. All were to wear white cockades or feathers, and to have a watchword, so as to be distinguished from the enemy. "The usual time for exploits of this kind," observes Washington, "is a little before day, for which reason a vigilant officer is then more on the watch. I therefore recommend a midnight hour."

On getting possession of Stony Point, Wayne was to turn its guns upon Fort Lafayette and the shipping. A detachment was to march down from West Point by Peekskill, to the vicinity of Fort Lafayette, and hold itself ready to join in the attack upon it, as soon as the cannonade began from Stony Point.

On the 15th of July, about mid-day, Wayne set out with his light infantry from Sandy Beach, fourteen miles distant from Stony Point. The roads were rugged, across mountains, morasses, and narrow defiles, in the skirts of the Dunderberg, where frequently it was necessary to proceed in single file. About eight in the evening, they arrived within a mile and a half of the forts, without being discovered. Not a dog barked to give the alarm—all the dogs in the neighborhood had been privately destroyed beforehand. Bringing the men to a halt,

Wayne and his principal officers went nearer, and carefully reconnoitered the works and their environs, so as to proceed understandingly and without confusion. Having made their observations they returned to the troops. Midnight, it will be recollected, was the time recommended by Washington for the attack. About half-past eleven, the whole moved forward, guided by a negro of the neighborhood who had frequently carried in fruit to the garrison, and served the Americans as a spy. He led the way, accompanied by two stout men disguised as farmers. The countersign was given to the first sentinel, posted on high ground west of the morass. While the negro talked with him, the man seized and gagged him. The sentinel posted at the head of the causeway was served in the same manner; so that hitherto no alarm was given. The causeway, however, was overflowed, and it was some time after twelve o'clock before the troops could cross; leaving three hundred men under General Muhlenberg, on the western side of the morass, as a reserve.

At the foot of the promontory, the troops were divided into two columns, for simultaneous attacks on opposite sides of the works. One hundred and fifty volunteers, led by Lieutenant-Colonel Fleury, seconded by Major

Posey, formed the vanguard of the right column. One hundred volunteers under Major Stewart, the vanguard of the left. In advance of each was a forlorn hope of twenty men, one led by Lieutenant Gibbon, the other by Lieutenant Knox; it was their desperate duty to remove the abatis. So well had the whole affair been conducted, that the Americans were close upon the outworks before they were discovered. There was then severe skirmishing at the pickets. The Americans used the bayonet; the others discharged their muskets. The reports roused the garrison. Stony Point was instantly in an uproar. The drums beat to arms; every one hurried to his alarm post; the works were hastily manned, and a tremendous fire of grape-shot and musketry opened upon the assailants.

The two columns forced their way with the bayonet, at opposite points, surmounting every obstacle. Colonel Fleury was the first to enter the fort and strike the British flag. Major Posey sprang to the ramparts and shouted, "The fort is our own." Wayne, who led the right column, received at the inner abatis a contusion on the head from a musket ball, and would have fallen to the ground, but his two aides-de-camp supported him. Thinking it was a death wound, "Carry me into the fort,"

said he, "and let me die at the head of my column." He was borne in between his aides, and soon recovered his self-possession. The two columns arrived nearly at the same time, and met in the centre of the works. The garrison surrendered at discretion.

At daybreak, as Washington directed, the guns of the fort were turned on Fort Lafayette and the shipping. The latter cut their cables and dropped down the river. Through a series of blunders, the detachment from West Point, which was to have co-operated, did not arrive in time, and came unprovided with suitable ammunition for their battering artillery. This part of the enterprise, therefore, failed; Fort Lafayette held out.

The storming of Stony Point stands out in high relief, as one of the most brilliant achievements of the war. The Americans had effected it without firing a musket. On their part, it was the silent, deadly work of the bayonet; the fierce resistance they met at the outset may be judged by the havoc made in their forlorn hope; out of twenty-two men, seventeen were either killed or wounded. The whole loss of the Americans was fifteen killed and eighty-three wounded. Of the garrison, sixty-three were slain, including two officers; five hundred and fifty-three were taken prison-

ers, among whom were a lieutenant-colonel, four captains, and twenty-three subaltern officers.

Wayne, in his despatches, writes: "The humanity of our brave soldiery, who scorned to take the lives of a vanquished foe when calling for mercy, reflects the highest honor on them, and accounts for the few of the enemy killed on the occasion." His words reflect honor on himself.

A British historian confirms his eulogy. "The conduct of the Americans upon this occasion was highly meritorious," writes he; "for they would have been fully justified in putting the garrison to the sword; not one man of which was put to death but in fair combat." *

We are happy to record an instance of generous feeling on the part of General Charles Lee, in connection with Stony Point. When he heard of Wayne's achievement, he wrote to him as follows: "What I am going to say, you will not, I hope, consider as paying my court in this hour of your glory; for, as it is at least my present intention to leave this continent, I can have no interest in paying my court to any individual. What I shall say, therefore, is dictated by the genuine feelings

* Stedman, vol. i., p. 145.

of my heart. I do most sincerely declare, that your assault of Stony Point is not only the most brilliant, in my opinion, throughout the whole course of the war on either side, but that it is the most brilliant I am acquainted with in history; the assault of Schweidnitz by Marshal Laudon, I think inferior to it. I wish you, therefore, most sincerely, joy of the laurels you have deservedly acquired, and that you may long live to wear them."

This is the more magnanimous on the part of Lee, as Wayne had been the chief witness against him in the court-martial after the affair of Monmouth, greatly to his annoyance. While Stony Point, therefore, stands a lasting monument of the daring courage of "Mad Anthony," let it call up the remembrance of this freak of generosity on the part of the eccentric Lee.

Tidings of the capture of Stony Point, and the imminent danger of Fort Lafayette, reached Sir Henry Clinton just after his conference with Sir George Collier at Throg's Neck. The expedition against New London was instantly given up; the transports and troops were recalled; a forced march was made to Dobbs Ferry on the Hudson; a detachment was sent up the river in transports to relieve Fort Lafayette, and Sir Henry followed with a greater

force, hoping Washington might quit his fastnesses, and risk a battle for the possession of Stony Point.

Again the Fabian policy of the American commander-in-chief disappointed the British general. Having well examined the post in company with an engineer and several general officers, he found that at least fifteen hundred men would be required to maintain it, a number not to be spared from the army at present.

The works, too, were only calculated for defense on the land side, and were open towards the river, where the enemy depended upon protection from their ships. It would be necessary to construct them anew, with great labor. The army, also, would have to be in the vicinity, too distant from West Point to aid in completing or defending its fortifications, and exposed to the risk of a general action on unfavorable terms.

For these considerations, in which all his officers concurred, Washington evacuated the post on the 18th, removing the cannon and stores, and destroying the works; after which he drew his forces together in the Highlands, and established his quarters at West Point, not knowing but that Sir Henry might attempt a retaliatory stroke on that most important fortress. The latter retook possession of Stony

Point, and fortified and garrisoned it more strongly than ever, but was too wary to risk an attempt upon the strongholds of the Highlands. Finding Washington was not to be tempted out of them, he ordered the transports to fall once more down the river, and returned to his former encampment at Philipsburg.

Chapter XVI.

Expedition against Penobscot—Night Surprisal of Paulus Hook—Washington Fortifies West Point—His Style of Living there—Table at Headquarters—Sir Henry Clinton Reinforced—Arrival of D'Estaing on the Coast of Georgia—Plans in Consequence—The French Minister at Washington's Highland Camp—Letter to Lafayette—D'Estaing Co-operates with Lincoln—Repulsed at Savannah—Washington Reinforces Lincoln—Goes into Winter Quarters—Sir Henry Clinton Sends an Expedition to the South.

THE brilliant affair of the storming of Stony Point, was somewhat overshadowed by the result of an enterprise at the eastward, undertaken without consulting Washington. A British detachment from Halifax of seven or eight hundred men, had founded in June a military post on the eastern side of the Bay of Penobscot, nine miles below the river of that name, and were erecting a fort there, intended to pro-

tect Nova Scotia, control the frontiers of Massachusetts, and command the vast wooded regions of Maine; whence inexhaustible supplies of timber might be procured for the royal shipyards at Halifax and elsewhere.

The people of Boston, roused by this movement, which invaded their territory, and touched their pride and interests, undertook, on their own responsibility, a naval and military expedition intended to drive off the invaders. All Boston was in a military bustle, enrolling militia and volunteers. An embargo of forty days was laid on the shipping, to facilitate the equipment of the naval armament; a squadron of armed ships and brigantines under Commodore Saltonstall, at length put to sea, convoying transports, on board of which were near four thousand land troops under General Lovel.

Arriving in the Penobscot on the 25th of May, they found Colonel Maclean posted on a peninsula, steep and precipitous toward the bay, and deeply trenched on the land side, with three ships of war anchored before it.

Lovel was repulsed, with some little loss, in an attempt to effect a landing on the Peninsula; but finally succeeded before daybreak on the 28th. The moment was propitious for a bold and vigorous blow. The fort was but

half finished; the guns were not mounted; the three armed vessels could not have offered a more formidable resistance; but, unfortunately, the energy of a Wayne was wanting to the enterprise. Lovel proceeded by regular siege. He threw up works at seven hundred and fifty yards distance, and opened a cannonade, which was continued from day to day, for a fortnight. The enemy availed themselves of the delay to strengthen their works, in which they were aided by men from the ships. Distrustful of the efficiency of the militia and of their continuance in camp, Lovel sent to Boston for a reinforcement of continental troops. He only awaited their arrival to carry the place by storm. A golden opportunity was lost by this excess of caution. It gave time for Admiral Collier at New York to hear of this enterprise, and take measures for its defeat.

On the 13th of August, Lovel was astounded by intelligence that the admiral was arrived before the bay with a superior armament. Thus fairly entrapped, he endeavored to extricate his force with as little loss as possible. Before news of Collier's arrival could reach the fort, he re-embarked his troops in the transports to make their escape up the river. His armed vessels were drawn up in a crescent as

if to give battle, but it was merely to hold the enemy in check. They soon gave way; some were captured, others were set on fire or blown up, and abandoned by their crews. The transports being eagerly pursued and in great danger of being taken, disgorged the troops and seamen on the wild shores of the river: whence they had to make the best of their way to Boston, struggling for upwards of a hundred miles through a pathless wilderness, before they reached the settled parts of the country; and several of them perishing through hunger and exhaustion.

If Washington was chagrined by the signal failure of this expedition, undertaken without his advice, he was cheered by the better fortune of one set on foot about the same time, under his own eye, by his young friend, Major Henry Lee of the Virginia dragoons. This active and daring officer had frequently been employed by him in scouring the country on the west side of the Hudson to collect information, keep an eye upon the enemy's posts, cut off their supplies, and check their foraging parties. The *coup de main* at Stony Point had piqued his emulation. In his communications to headquarters he intimated that an opportunity presented for an exploit of almost equal daring. In the course of his reconnoitering,

and by means of spies, he had discovered that the British post at Paulus Hook, immediately opposite to New York, was very negligently guarded. Paulus Hook is a long, low point of the Jersey shore, stretching into the Hudson, and connected to the mainland by a sandy isthmus. A fort had been erected on it, and garrisoned with four or five hundred men, under the command of Major Sutherland. It was a strong position. A creek fordable only in two places rendered the Hook difficult of access. Within this, a deep trench had been cut across the isthmus, traversed by a drawbridge with a barred gate; and still within this was a double row of abatis, extending into the water. The whole position, with the country immediately adjacent, was separated from the rest of Jersey by the Hackensack River, running parallel to the Hudson, at the distance of a very few miles, and only traversable in boats, excepting at the New Bridge, about fourteen miles from Paulus Hook.

Confident in the strength of his position, and its distance from any American force, Major Sutherland had become remiss in his military precautions; the want of vigilance in a commander soon produces carelessness in subalterns, and a general negligence prevailed in the garrison.

All this had been ascertained by Major Lee; and he now proposed the daring project of surprising the fort at night, and thus striking an insulting blow "within cannon-shot of New York." Washington was pleased with the project; he had a relish for signal enterprises of the kind; he was aware of their striking and salutary effect upon both friend and foe; and was disposed to favor the adventurous schemes of this young officer. The chief danger in the present one, would be in the evacuation and retreat after the blow had been effected, owing to the proximity of the enemy's force at New York. In consenting to the enterprise, therefore, he stipulated that Lee should not undertake it unless sure, from previous observation, that the post could be carried by instant surprise; when carried, no time was to be lost in attempting to bring off cannon or any other articles; or in collecting stragglers of the garrison who might skulk and hide themselves. He was "to surprise the post, bring off the garrison immediately, and effect a retreat."

On the 18th of August, Lee set out on the expedition, at the head of three hundred men of Lord Stirling's division, and a troop of dismounted dragoons under Captain McLane. The attack was to be made that night. Lest

the enemy should hear of their movement, it was given out that they were on a mere foraging excursion. The road they took lay along that belt of rocky and wooded heights which borders the Hudson, and forms a rugged neck between it and the Hackensack. Lord Stirling followed with five hundred men, and encamped at the New Bridge on that river, to be at hand to render aid if required. As it would be perilous to return along the rugged neck just mentioned, from the number of the enemy encamped along the Hudson, Lee, after striking the blow, was to push for Dow's Ferry on the Hackensack, not far from Paulus Hook, where boats would be waiting to receive him.

It was between two and three in the morning when Lee arrived at the creek which rendered Paulus Hook difficult of access. It happened, fortunately, that Major Sutherland, the British commander, had the day before detached a foraging party under a Major Buskirk, to a part of the country called the English Neighborhood. As Lee and his men approached, they were mistaken by the sentinel for this party on its return. The darkness of the night favored the mistake. They passed the creek and ditch, entered the works unmolested, and had made themselves masters of the post before

the negligent garrison were well roused from sleep. Major Sutherland and about sixty Hessians threw themselves into a small block-house on the left of the fort, and opened an irregular fire. To attempt to dislodge them would have cost too much time. Alarm guns from the ships in the river and the forts at New York threatened speedy reinforcement to the enemy. Having made one hundred and fifty-nine prisoners, among whom were three officers, Lee commenced his retreat without tarrying to destroy either barracks or artillery. He had achieved his object—*a coup de main* of signal audacity. Few of the enemy were slain, for there was but little fighting, and no massacre. His own loss was two men killed and three wounded.

His retreat was attended by perils and perplexities. Through blunder or misapprehension, the boats which he was to have found at Dow's Ferry on the Hackensack, disappointed him; and he had to make his way with his weary troops up the neck of land between that river and the Hudson, in imminent danger of being cut up by Buskirk and his scouting detachment. Fortunately Lord Stirling heard of his peril, and sent out a force to cover his retreat, which was effected in safety. Washington felt the value of this hardy and brilliant

exploit. "The increase of confidence," said he, "which the army will derive from this affair and that of Stony Point, though great, will be among the least of the advantages resulting from these events." In a letter to the President of Congress, he extolled the prudence address, enterprise, and bravery displayed on the occasion by Major Lee; in consequence of which the latter received the signal reward of a gold medal.

Washington was now at West Point, diligently providing for the defense of the Highlands against any further attempts of the enemy. During the time that he made this his headquarters, the most important works, we are told, were completed, especially the fort at West Point, which formed the citadel of those mountains.

Of his singularly isolated situation with respect to public affairs, we have evidence in the following passage of a letter to Edmund Randolph, who had recently taken a seat in Congress: "I shall be happy in such communications as your leisure and other considerations will permit you to transmit to me, for I am as totally unacquainted with the political state of things, and what is going forward in the great national council, as if I was an alien; when a competent knowledge of the temper and designs

of our allies, from time to time, and the frequent changes and complexion of affairs in Europe might, as they ought to do, have a considerable influence on the operations of our army, and would in many cases determine the propriety of measures, which under a cloud of darkness can only be groped at. I say this upon a presumption that Congress, either through their own ministers or that of France, must be acquainted in some degree with the plans of Great Britain, and the designs of France and Spain. If I mistake in this conjecture, it is to be lamented that they have not better information; or, if political motives render disclosures of this kind improper, I am content to remain in ignorance."

Of the style of living at headquarters, we have a picture in the following letter to Doctor John Cochran, the surgeon-general and physician of the army. It is almost the only instance of sportive writing in all Washington's correspondence.

"DEAR DOCTOR,—I have asked Mrs. Cochran and Mrs. Livingston to dine with me tomorrow; but am I not in honor bound to apprise them of their fare? As I hate deception, even where the imagination only is concerned, I will. It is needless to premise that my table

is large enough to hold the ladies. Of this they had ocular proof yesterday. To say how it is usually covered is more essential, and this shall be the purport of my letter.

"Since our arrival at this happy spot, we have had a ham, sometimes a shoulder of bacon, to grace the head of the table: a piece of roast beef adorns the foot; and a dish of beans or greens, almost imperceptible, decorates the centre. When the cook has a mind to cut a figure, which I presume will be the case to-morrow, we have two beefsteak pies, or dishes of crabs, in addition, one on each side of the centre dish, dividing the space and reducing the distance between dish and dish to about six feet, which, without them, would be about twelve feet apart. Of late he has had the surprising sagacity to discover that apples will make pies, and it is a question, if, in the violence of his efforts, we do not get one of apples instead of having both of beefsteaks. If the ladies can put up with such entertainment, and will submit to partake of it on plates once tin but now iron (not become so by the labor of scouring), I shall be happy to see them."

We may add, that, however poor the fare and poor the table equipage at headquarters, everything was conducted with strict etiquette

and decorum, and we make no doubt the ladies in question were handed in with as much courtesy to the bacon and greens and tin dishes, as though they were to be regaled with the daintiest viands, served up on enamelled plate and porcelain.

The arrival of Admiral Arbuthnot, with a fleet, bringing three thousand troops and a supply of provisions and stores, strengthened the hands of Sir Henry Clinton. Still he had not sufficient force to warrant any further attempt up the Hudson; Washington, by his diligence in fortifying West Point, having rendered that fastness of the Highlands apparently impregnable. Sir Henry turned his thoughts, therefore, towards the South, hoping, by a successful expedition in that direction, to counterbalance ill success in other quarters. As this would require large detachments, he threw up additional works on New York Island and at Brooklyn, to render his position secure with the diminished force that would remain with him.

At this juncture news was received of the arrival of the Count D'Estaing, with a formidable fleet on the coast of Georgia, having made a successful cruise in the West Indies, in the course of which he had taken St. Vincent's and Grenada. A combined attack upon

New York was again talked of. In anticipation of it, Washington called upon several of the Middle States for supplies of all kinds, and reinforcements of militia. Sir Henry Clinton, also, changed his plans; caused Rhode Island to be evacuated; the troops and stores to be brought away; the garrisons brought off from Stony and Verplanck's Points, and all his forces to be concentrated at New York, which he endeavored to put in the strongest posture of defense.

Intelligence recently received, too, that Spain had joined France in hostilities against England, contributed to increase the solicitude and perplexities of the enemy, while it gave fresh confidence to the Americans.

The Chevalier de la Luzerne, minister from France, with Mons. Barbé Marbois, his secretary of legation, having recently landed at Boston, paid Washington a visit at his mountain fortress, bringing letters of introduction from Lafayette. The chevalier not having yet announced himself to Congress, did not choose to be received in his public character. "If he had," writes Washington, "except paying him military honors, it was not my intention to depart from that plain and simple manner of living, which accords with the real interest and policy of men struggling under every diffi-

culty for the attainment of the most inestimable blessing of life, *liberty*."

In conformity with his intention, he welcomed the chevalier to the mountains with the thunder of artillery, and received him at his fortress with military ceremonial; but very probably surprised him with the stern simplicity of his table, while he charmed him with the dignity and grace with which he presided at it. The ambassador evidently acquitted himself with true French suavity and diplomatic tact. "He was polite enough," writes Washington, "to approve my principle, and condescended to appear pleased with our Spartan living. In a word, he made us all exceedingly happy by his affability and good humor while he remained in camp."

The letters from Lafayette spoke of his favorable reception at court, and his appointment to an honorable situation in the French army. "I had no doubt," writes Washington, "that this would be the case. To hear it from yourself adds pleasure to the account. And here, my dear friend, let me congratulate you. None can do it with more warmth of affection, or sincere joy than myself. Your forward zeal in the cause of liberty; your singular attachment to this infant world; your ardent and persevering efforts, not only in America, but

since your return to France, to serve the United States; your polite attention to Americans, and your strict and uniform friendship for *me*, have ripened the first impressions of esteem and attachment which I imbibed for you, into such perfect love and gratitude, as neither time nor absence can impair. This will warrant my assuring you that, whether in the character of an officer at the head of a corps of gallant Frenchmen, if circumstances should require this, whether as a major-general commanding a division of the American army, or whether, after our swords and spears have given place to the ploughshare and the pruning-hook, I see you as a private gentleman, a friend and companion, I shall welcome you with all the warmth of friendship to Columbia's shores; and, in the latter case, to my rural cottage, where homely fare and a cordial reception, shall be substituted for delicacies and costly living. This, from past experience, I know you can submit to; and if the lovely partner of your happiness will consent to participate with *us* in such rural entertainment and amusements, I can undertake, on behalf of Mrs. Washington, that she will do everything in her power to make Virginia agreeable to the marchioness. My inclination and endeavors to do this cannot be doubted, when I

assure you, that I love everybody that is dear to you, and consequently participate in the pleasure you feel in the prospect of again becoming a parent, and do most sincerely congratulate you and your lady on this fresh pledge she is about to give you of her love."

Washington's anticipations of a combined operation with D'Estaing against New York were again disappointed. The French admiral, on arriving on the coast of Georgia, had been persuaded to co-operate with the Southern army, under General Lincoln, in an attempt to recover Savannah, which had fallen into the hands of the British during the preceding year. For three weeks a siege was carried on with great vigor, by regular approaches on land, and cannonade and bombardment from the shipping. On the 9th of October, although the approaches were not complete, and no sufficient breach had been effected, Lincoln, and D'Estaing, at the head of their choicest troops, advanced before daybreak to storm the works. The assault was gallant but unsuccessful; both Americans and French had planted their standards on the redoubts, but were finally repulsed. After the repulse, both armies retired from before the place, the French having lost in killed and wounded upwards of six hundred men, the Americans about four hundred.

D'Estaing himself was among the wounded, and the gallant Count Pulaski among the slain. The loss of the enemy was trifling, being protected by their works.

The Americans recrossed the Savannah River into South Carolina; the militia returned to their homes, and the French re-embarked.

The tidings of this reverse, which reached Washington late in November, put an end to all prospect of co-operation from the French fleet; a consequent change took place in all his plans. The militia of New York and Massachusetts, recently assembled, were disbanded, and arrangements were made for the winter. The army was thrown into two divisions; one was to be stationed under General Heath in the Highlands, for the protection of West Point and the neighboring posts; the other and principal division was to be hutted near Morristown, where Washington was to have his headquarters. The cavalry were to be sent to Connecticut.

Understanding that Sir Henry Clinton was making preparations at New York for a large embarkation of troops, and fearing they might be destined against Georgia and Carolina, he resolved to detach the greater part of his Southern troops for the protection of those States; a provident resolution, in which he

was confirmed by subsequent instructions from Congress. Accordingly, the North Carolina brigade took up its march for Charleston in November, and the whole of the Virginia line in December.

Notwithstanding the recent preparations at New York, the ships remained in port, and the enemy held themselves in collected force there. Doubts began to be entertained of some furtive design nearer at hand, and measures were taken to protect the army against an attack when in winter quarters. Sir Henry, however, was regulating his movements by those the French fleet might make after the repulse at Savannah. Intelligence at length arrived that it had been dispersed by a violent storm. Count D'Estaing, with a part, had shaped his course for France; the rest had proceeded to the West Indies.

Sir Henry now lost no time in carrying his plans into operation. Leaving the garrison of New York under the command of Lieutenant-General Knyphausen, he embarked several thousand men, on board of transports, to be convoyed by five ships of the line and several frigates under Admiral Arbuthnot, and set sail on the 26th of December, accompanied by Lord Cornwallis, on an expedition intended for the capture of Charleston and the reduction of South Carolina.

Chapter XVII.

Sufferings of the Army at Morristown—Rigorous Winter—Derangement of the Currency—Confusion in the Commissariat—Impressment of Supplies—Patriotic Conduct of the People of New Jersey—The Bay of New York Frozen over—Lord Stirling's Expedition against Staten Island—Knyphausen's Incursion into the Jerseys—Caldwell's Church at Elizabethtown Burnt—Character of its Pastor—Foray into Westchester County—Burning of Young's House in the Valley of the Neperan.

THE dreary encampment at Valley Forge has become proverbial for its hardships; yet they were scarcely more severe than those suffered by Washington's army during the present winter, while hutted among the heights of Morristown. The winter set in early, and was uncommonly rigorous. The transportation of supplies was obstructed; the magazines were exhausted, and the commissaries had neither money nor credit to enable them to replenish them. For

weeks at a time the army was on half allowance; sometimes without meat, sometimes without bread, sometimes without both. There was a scarcity, too, of clothing and blankets, so that the poor soldiers were starving with cold as well as hunger.

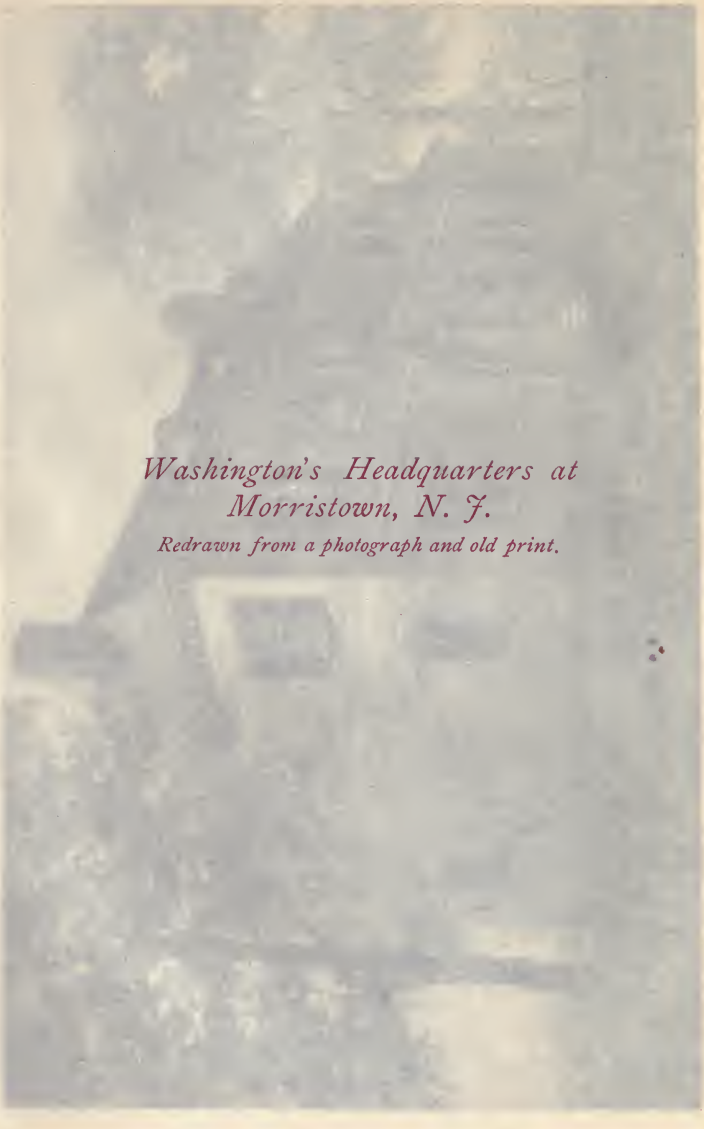
Washington wrote to President Reed of Pennsylvania, entreating aid and supplies from that State to keep his army from disbanding. "We have never," said he, "experienced a like extremity at any period of the war." *

The year 1780 opened upon a famishing camp. "For a fortnight past," writes Washington, on the 8th of January, "the troops, both officers and men, have been almost perishing with want. Yet," adds he, feelingly, "they have borne their sufferings with a patience that merits the approbation, and ought to excite the sympathies of their countrymen."

The severest trials of the Revolution, in fact, were not in the field, where there were shouts to excite and laurels to be won; but in the squalid wretchedness of ill-provided camps, where there was nothing to cheer and everything to be endured. To suffer was the lot of the revolutionary soldier.

A rigorous winter had much to do with the actual distresses of the army, but the root of

* *Life of Reed*, ii., 189.



Washington's Headquarters at Morristown, N. J.

Redrawn from a photograph and old print.

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the evil lay in the derangement of the currency. Congress had commenced the war without adequate funds, and without the power of imposing direct taxes. To meet pressing emergencies, it had emitted paper money, which, for a time, passed currently at par; but sank in value as further emissions succeeded, and that already in circulation remained unredeemed. The several States added to the evil by emitting paper in their separate capacities: thus the country gradually became flooded with a "Continental currency," as it was called; irredeemable, and of no intrinsic value. The consequence was a general derangement of trade and finance. The Continental currency declined to such a degree, that forty dollars in paper were equivalent to only one in specie.

Congress attempted to put a stop to this depreciation, by making paper money a legal tender, at its nominal value, in the discharge of debts, however contracted. This opened the door to knavery, and added a new feature to the evil.

The commissaries now found it difficult to purchase supplies for the immediate wants of the army, and impossible to provide any stores in advance. They were left destitute of funds, and the public credit was prostrated by the accumulating debts suffered to remain uncan-

celled. The changes which had taken place in the commissary department added to this confusion. The commissary-general, instead of receiving, as heretofore, a commission on expenditures, was to have a fixed salary in paper currency; and his deputies were to be compensated in like manner, without the usual allowance of rations and forage. No competent agents could be procured on such terms; and the derangement produced throughout the department compelled Colonel Wadsworth, the able and upright commissary-general, to resign.

In the present emergency Washington was reluctantly compelled, by the distresses of the army, to call upon the counties of the State for supplies of grain and cattle, proportioned to their respective abilities. These supplies were to be brought into the camp within a certain time; the grain to be measured and the cattle estimated by any two of the magistrates of the county in conjunction with the commissary, and certificates to be given by the latter, specifying the quantity of each and the terms of payment.

Wherever a compliance with this call was refused, the articles required were to be impressed: it was a painful alternative, yet nothing else could save the army from dissolution or starving. Washington charged his officers

to act with as much tenderness as possible, graduating the exaction according to the stock of each individual, so that no family should be deprived of what was necessary to its subsistence. "While your measures are adapted to the emergency," writes he to Colonel Matthias Ogden, "and you consult what you owe to the service, I am persuaded you will not forget that, as we are compelled by necessity to take the property of citizens for the support of an army on which their safety depends, we should be careful to manifest that we have a reverence for their rights, and wish not to do anything which that necessity, and even their own good, do not absolutely require."

To the honor of the magistrates and the people of Jersey, Washington testifies that his requisitions were punctually complied with, and in many counties exceeded. Too much praise, indeed, cannot be given to the people of this State for the patience with which most of them bore these exactions, and the patriotism with which many of them administered to the wants of their countrymen in arms. Exhausted as the State was by repeated drainings, yet, at one time, when deep snows cut off all distant supplies, Washington's army was wholly subsisted by it. "Provisions came in with hearty good-will from the farmers in

Medham, Chatham, Hanover, and other rural places, together with stockings, shoes, coats, and blankets; while the women met together to knit and sew for the soldiery." *

As the winter advanced, the cold increased in severity. It was the most intense ever remembered in the country. The great bay of New York was frozen over. No supplies could come to the city by water. Provisions grew scanty, and there was such lack of fire-wood, that old transports were broken up, and uninhabited wooden houses pulled down for fuel. The safety of the city was endangered. The ships of war, immovably ice-bound in its harbor, no longer gave it protection. The insular security of the place was at an end. An army with its heaviest artillery and baggage might cross the Hudson on the ice. The veteran Knyphausen began to apprehend an invasion, and took measures accordingly; the seamen

* From manuscript notes by the Rev. Joseph Tuttle. This worthy clergyman gives many anecdotes illustrative of the active patriotism of the Jersey women. Anna Kitchel, wife of a farmer of Whippany, is repeatedly his theme of well-merited eulogium. Her potato bin, meal bag, and granary, writes he, had always some comfort for the patriot soldiers. When unable to billet them in her house, a huge kettle filled with meat and vegetables was hung over the fire, that they might not go away hungry.

of the ships and transports were landed and formed into companies, and the inhabitants of the city were embodied, officered, and subjected to garrison duty.

Washington was aware of the opportunity which offered itself for a signal *coup de main*, but was not in a condition to profit by it. His troops, hutted among the heights of Morristown, were half fed, half clothed, and inferior in number to the garrison of New York. He was destitute of funds necessary to fit them for the enterprise, and the quartermaster could not furnish means of transportation.

Still, in the frozen condition of the bay and rivers, some minor blow might be attempted, sufficient to rouse and cheer the spirits of the people. With this view, having ascertained that the ice formed a bridge across the strait between the Jersey shore and Staten Island, he projected a descent upon the latter by Lord Stirling with twenty-five hundred men, to surprise and capture a British force of ten or twelve hundred.

His lordship crossed on the night of the 14th of January, from De Hart's Point to the island. His approach was discovered; the troops took refuge in the works, which were too strongly situated to be attacked; a channel remaining

open through the ice across the bay, a boat was despatched to New York for reinforcements.

The projected surprise having thus proved a complete failure, and his own situation becoming hazardous, Lord Stirling recrossed to the Jersey shore with a number of prisoners whom he had captured. He was pursued by a party of cavalry, which he repulsed, and effected a retreat to Elizabethtown. Some few stragglers fell into the hands of the enemy, and many of his men were severely frostbitten.

By way of retort, Knyphausen, on the 25th of January, sent out two detachments to harass the American outposts. One crossed to Paulus Hook, and being joined by part of the garrison of that post, pushed on to Newark, surprised and captured a company stationed there, set fire to the academy, and returned without loss.

The other detachment, consisting of one hundred dragoons and between three and four hundred infantry, under Lieutenant-Colonel Boskirk, crossed from Staten Island to Trembly's Point, surprised the picket-guard at Elizabethtown, and captured two majors, two captains, and forty-two privates. This, likewise, was effected without loss. The disgraceful part of the expedition was the

burning of the town-house, a church, and a private residence, and the plundering of the inhabitants.

The church destroyed was a Presbyterian place of worship, and its pastor, the Rev. James Caldwell, had rendered himself an especial object of hostility to both Briton and tory. He was a zealous patriot; had served as chaplain to those portions of the American army that successively occupied the Jerseys; and now officiated in that capacity in Colonel Elias Dayton's regiment, beside occasionally acting as commissary. His church had at times served as hospital to the American soldiers; or shelter to the hastily assembled militia. Its bell was the tocsin of alarm; from its pulpit he had many a time stirred up the patriotism of his countrymen by his ardent, eloquent, and pathetic appeals, laying beside him his pistols before he commenced. His popularity in the army, and among the Jersey people, was unbounded. He was termed by his friends a "rousing gospel preacher," and by the enemy a "frantic priest" and a "rebel firebrand." On the present occasion, his church was set on fire by a virulent tory of the neighborhood, who, as he saw it wrapped in flames, "regretted that the black-coated rebel, Caldwell, was not in his pulpit." We shall have occasion

to speak of the fortunes of this pastor and his family hereafter.

Another noted maraud during Knyphausen's military sway, was in the lower part of Westchester County, in a hilly region lying between the British and American lines, which had been the scene of part of the past year's campaign. Being often foraged, its inhabitants had become belligerent in habits, and quick to retaliate on all marauders.

In this region, about twenty miles from the British outposts, and not far from White Plains, the Americans had established a post of three hundred men at a stone building commonly known as Young's house, from the name of its owner. It commanded a road which passed from north to south down along the narrow but fertile valley of the Sawmill River, now known by its original Indian name of the Neperan. On this road the garrison of Young's house kept a vigilant eye, to intercept the convoys of cattle and provisions which had been collected or plundered by the enemy, and which passed down this valley toward New York. This post had long been an annoyance to the enemy, but its distance from the British lines had hitherto saved it from attack. The country was now covered with snow; troops could be rapidly transported on sleighs;

and it was determined that Young's house should be surprised, and this rebel nest broken up.

On the evening of the 2d of February, an expedition set out for the purpose from King's Bridge, led by Lieutenant-Colonel Norton, and consisting of four flank companies of guards, two companies of Hessians, and a party of Yagers, all in sleighs; besides a body of Yager cavalry, and a number of mounted Westchester refugees, with two three-pounders.

The snow, being newly fallen, was deep; the sleighs broke their way through it with difficulty. The troops at length abandoned them and pushed forward on foot. The cannon were left behind for the same reason. It was a weary tramp; the snow in many places was more than two feet deep, and they had to take by-ways and cross-roads to avoid the American patrols.

The sun rose while they were yet seven miles from Young's house. To surprise the post was out of the question; still they kept on. Before they could reach the house the country had taken the alarm, and the Westchester yeomanry had armed themselves, and were hastening to aid the garrison.

The British light infantry and grenadiers invested the mansion; the cavalry posted

themselves on a neighboring eminence, to prevent retreat or reinforcement, and the house was assailed. It made a brave resistance, and was aided by some of the yeomanry stationed in an adjacent orchard. The garrison, however, was overpowered; numbers were killed, and ninety taken prisoners. The house was sacked and set in flames; and thus having broken up this stronghold of the country, the party hastened to effect a safe return to the lines with their prisoners, some of whom were so badly wounded that they had to be left at different farm-houses on the road. The detachment reached King's Bridge by nine o'clock the same evening, and boasted that, in this enterprise, they had sustained no other loss than two killed and twenty-three wounded.

Of the prisoners many were doubtless farmers and farmers' sons, who had turned out in defense of their homes, and were now to be transferred to the horrors of the jail and sugar-house in New York. We give this affair as a specimen of the *petite guerre* carried on in the southern part of Westchester County: the NEUTRAL GROUND, as it was called, but subjected, from its vicinity to the city, to be foraged by the royal forces, and plundered and insulted by refugees and tories. No part of

the Union was more harried and trampled down by friend and foe, during the Revolution, than this debatable region and the Jerseys.

WASHINGTON'S VISITING CARD.

Chapter XVIII.

Arnold in Command of Philadelphia—Unpopular Measures—Arnold's Style of Living—His Schemes and Speculations—His Collisions with the Executive Council—His Land Project—Charges Sent against him to Congress—His Address to the Public—Charges Referred to a Court-Martial—His Marriage—Verdict of the Court-Martial—Arnold Reprimanded—Obtains Leave of Absence from the Army.

THE most irksome duty that Washington had to perform during this winter's encampment at Morristown, regarded General Arnold and his military government of Philadelphia in 1778. To explain it requires a glance back to that period.

At the time of entering upon this command, Arnold's accounts with government were yet unsettled, the committee appointed by Congress, at his own request, to examine them, having considered some of his charges dubious, and others exorbitant. Washington, how-

ever, still looked upon him with favor, and, but a month previously, had presented him with a pair of epaulettes and a sword-knot, "as a testimony of his sincere regard and approbation."

The command of Philadelphia, at this time, was a delicate and difficult one, and required to be exercised with extreme circumspection. The boundaries between the powers vested in the military commander, and those inherent in the State government, were ill defined. Disaffection to the American cause prevailed both among the permanent and casual residents, and required to be held in check with firmness but toleration. By a resolve of Congress, no goods, wares, or merchandise were to be removed, transferred, or sold, until the ownership of them could be ascertained by a joint committee of Congress and of the Council of Pennsylvania; any public stores belonging to the enemy were to be seized and converted to the use of the army.

Washington, in his letter of instructions, left it to Arnold's discretion to adopt such measures as should appear to him most effectual and least offensive in executing this resolve of Congress; in which he was to be aided by an assistant quartermaster-general, subject to his directions. "You will take every prudent step in your power," writes Washington, "to

preserve tranquillity and order in the city, and give security to individuals of every class and description, restraining, as far as possible, till the restoration of civil government, every species of persecution, insult, or abuse, either from the soldiery to the inhabitants, or among each other."

One of Arnold's first measures was to issue a proclamation enforcing the resolve of Congress. In so doing, he was countenanced by leading personages of Philadelphia, and the proclamation was drafted by General Joseph Reed. The measure excited great dissatisfaction, and circumstances attending the enforcement of it gave rise to scandal. Former instances of a mercenary spirit made Arnold liable to suspicions, and it was alleged that, while by the proclamation he shut up the stores and shops so that even the officers of the army could not procure necessary articles of merchandise, he was privately making large purchases for his own enrichment.

His style of living gave point to this scandal. He occupied one of the finest houses in the city; set up a splendid establishment; had his carriage and four horses and a train of domestics; gave expensive entertainments, and indulged in a luxury and parade which were condemned as little befitting a republican gen-

eral; especially one whose accounts with government were yet unsettled, and one who had imputations of mercenary rapacity still hanging over him.

Ostentatious prodigality, in fact, was Arnold's besetting sin. To cope with his overwhelming expenses, he engaged in various speculations, more befitting the trafficking habits of his early life than his present elevated position. Nay, he availed himself of that position to aid his speculations, and sometimes made temporary use of the public moneys passing through his hands. In his impatience to be rich, he at one time thought of taking command of a privateer, and making lucrative captures at sea.

In the exercise of his military functions, he had become involved in disputes with the president (Wharton) and executive council of Pennsylvania, and by his conduct, which was deemed arbitrary and arrogant, had drawn upon himself the hostility of that body, which became stern and unsparing censors of his conduct.

He had not been many weeks in Philadelphia before he became attached to one of its reigning belles, Miss Margaret Shippen, daughter of Mr. Edward Shippen, in after years chief justice of Pennsylvania. Her family were not

considered well affected to the American cause; the young lady herself, during the occupation of the city by the enemy, had been a "toast" among the British officers, and selected as one of the beauties of the Mischianza.

Arnold paid her addresses in an open and honorable style, first obtaining by letter the sanction of the father. Party feeling at that time ran high in Philadelphia on local subjects connected with the change of the State government. Arnold's connection with the Shippen family increased his disfavor with the president and executive council, who were whigs to a man; and it was sneeringly observed, that "he had courted the loyalists from the start."

General Joseph Reed, at that time one of the executive committee, observes in a letter to General Greene, "Will you not think it extraordinary that General Arnold made a public entertainment the night before last, of which, not only common tory ladies, but the wives and daughters of persons proscribed by the State, and now with the enemy at New York, formed a very considerable number? The fact is literally true."

Regarded from a different point of view, this conduct might have been attributed to the courtesy of a gallant soldier; who scorned to carry the animosity of the field into the drawing-

room, or to proscribe and persecute the wives and daughters of political exiles.

In the beginning of December, General Reed became president of the executive council of Pennsylvania, and under his administration the ripening hostility to Arnold was brought to a crisis. Among the various schemes of the latter for bettering his fortunes, and securing the means of living when the war should come to an end, was one for forming a settlement in the western part of the State of New York, to be composed, principally, of the officers and soldiers who had served under him. His scheme was approved by Mr. John Jay, the pure-minded patriot of New York, at that time President of Congress, and was sanctioned by the New York delegation. Provided with letters from them, Arnold left Philadelphia about the 1st of January (1779), and set out for Albany to obtain a grant of land for the purpose, from the New York Legislature.

Within a day or two after his departure, his public conduct was discussed in the executive council of Pennsylvania, and it was resolved unanimously, that the course of his military command in the city had been in many respects oppressive, unworthy of his rank and station, and highly discouraging to the liberties and interests of America, and disrespect-

ful to the supreme executive authority of the State.

As he was an officer of the United States, the complaints and grievances of Pennsylvania were set forth by the executive council in eight charges, and forwarded to Congress, accompanied by documents, and a letter from President Reed.

Information of these facts, with a printed copy of the charges, reached Arnold at Washington's camp on the Raritan, which he had visited while on the way to Albany. His first solicitude was about the effect they might have upon Miss Shippen, to whom he was now engaged. In a letter dated February 8th, he entreated her not to suffer these rude attacks on him to give her a moment's uneasiness—they could do him no injury.

On the following day he issued an address to the public, recalling his faithful services of nearly four years, and inveighing against the proceedings of the president and council; who, not content with injuring him in a cruel and unprecedented manner with Congress, had ordered copies of their charges to be printed and dispersed throughout the several States, for the purpose of prejudicing the public mind against him, while the matter was yet in suspense. "Their conduct," writes he, "appears

the more cruel and malicious, in making the charges after I had left the city; as my intention of leaving the city was known for five weeks before." This complaint, we must observe, was rebutted, on their part, by the assertion that, at the time of his departure, he knew of the accusation that was impending.

In conclusion, Arnold informed the public that he had requested Congress to direct a court-martial to inquire into his conduct, and trusted his countrymen would suspend their judgment in the matter, until he should have an opportunity of being heard.

Public opinion was divided. His brilliant services spoke eloquently in his favor. His admirers repined that a fame won by such daring exploits on the field should be stifled down by cold calumnies in Philadelphia; and many thought, dispassionately, that the State authorities had acted with excessive harshness towards a meritorious officer, in widely spreading their charges against him, and thus, in an unprecedented way, putting a public brand upon him.

On the 16th of February, Arnold's appeal to Congress was referred to the committee which had under consideration the letter of President Reed and its accompanying documents, and it was charged to make a report

with all convenient despatch. A motion was made to suspend Arnold from all command during the inquiry. To the credit of Congress it was negatived.

Much contrariety of feeling prevailed on the subject in the committee of Congress and the executive council of Pennsylvania, and the correspondence between those legislative bodies was occasionally tinctured with needless acrimony.

Arnold, in the course of January, had obtained permission from Washington to resign the command of Philadelphia, but deferred to act upon it, until the charges against him should be examined, lest, as he said, his enemies should misinterpret his motives, and ascribe his resignation to fear of a disgraceful suspension in consequence of those charges.

About the middle of March, the committee brought in a report exculpating him from all criminality in the matters charged against him. As soon as the report was brought in, he considered his name vindicated, and resigned.

Whatever exultation he may have felt was short-lived. Congress did not call up and act upon the report, as, in justice to him, they should have done, whether to sanction it or not; but referred the subject anew to a joint

committee of their body and the assembly and council of Pennsylvania. Arnold was at this time on the eve of marriage with Miss Shippen, and, thus circumstanced, it must have been peculiarly galling to his pride to be kept under the odium of imputed delinquencies.

The report of the joint committee brought up animated discussions in Congress. Several resolutions recommended by the committee were merely of a formal nature, and intended to soothe the wounded sensibilities of Pennsylvania; these were passed without dissent; but it was contended that certain charges advanced by the executive council of that State were only cognizable by a court-martial, and, after a warm debate, it was resolved (April 3d), by a large majority, that the commander-in-chief should appoint such a court for the consideration of them.

Arnold inveighed bitterly against the injustice of subjecting him to a trial before a military tribunal for alleged offenses of which he had been acquitted by the committee of Congress. He was sacrificed, he said, to avoid a breach with Pennsylvania. In a letter to Washington, he charged it all to the hostility of President Reed, who, he affirmed, had by his address kept the affair in suspense for two months, and at last obtained the resolution

of Congress directing the court-martial. He urged Washington to appoint a speedy day for the trial, that he might not linger under the odium of an unjust public accusation. "I have no doubt of obtaining justice from a court-martial," writes he, "as every officer in the army must feel himself injured by the cruel and unprecedented treatment I have met with. . . . When your Excellency considers my sufferings, and the cruel situation I am in, your own humanity and feeling as a soldier will render everything I can say further on the subject unnecessary."

It was doubtless soothing to his irritated pride, that the woman on whom he had placed his affections remained true to him; for his marriage with Miss Shippen took place just five days after the mortifying vote of Congress.

Washington sympathized with Arnold's impatience, and appointed the 1st of May for the trial, but it was repeatedly postponed; first, at the request of the Pennsylvania council, to allow time for the arrival of witnesses from the South; afterwards, in consequence of threatening movements of the enemy, which obliged every officer to be at his post. Arnold, in the meantime, continued to reside in Philadelphia, holding his commission in the army, but filling no public office; getting deeper and

deeper in debt, and becoming more and more unpopular.

Having once been attacked in the street in the course of some popular tumult, he affected to consider his life in danger, and applied to Congress for a guard of Continental soldiers, "as no protection was to be expected from the authority of the State for an honest man."

He was told in reply that his application ought to have been made to the executive authority of Pennsylvania; "in whose disposition to protect every honest citizen, Congress had full confidence, *and highly disapproved the insinuation of every individual to the contrary.*"

For months, Arnold remained in this anxious and irritated state. His situation, he said, was cruel. His character would continue to suffer until he should be acquitted by a court-martial, and he would be effectually prevented from joining the army, which he wished to do as soon as his wounds would permit, that he might render the country every service in his power in this critical time. "For though I have been ungratefully treated," adds he, "I do not consider it as from my countrymen in general, but from a set of men, who, void of principle, are governed entirely by private interest."

At length, when the campaign was over, and the army had gone into winter quarters, the long-delayed court-martial was assembled at Morristown. Of the eight charges originally advanced against Arnold by the Pennsylvania council, four only came under cognizance of the court. Of two of these he was entirely acquitted. The remaining two were—

First. That while in the camp at Valley Forge, he, without the knowledge of the commander-in-chief, or the sanction of the State government, had granted a written permission for a vessel belonging to disaffected persons, to proceed from the port of Philadelphia, then in possession of the enemy, to any port of the United States.

Second. That, availing himself of his official authority, he had appropriated the public wagons of Pennsylvania, when called forth on a special emergency, to the transportation of private property, and that of persons who voluntarily remained with the enemy, and were deemed disaffected to the interests and independence of America.

In regard to the first of these charges, Arnold alleged that the person who applied for the protection of the vessel, had taken the oath of allegiance to the State of Pennsylvania required by the laws; that he was not residing in

Philadelphia at the time, but had applied on behalf of himself and a company, and that the intentions of that person and his associates with regard to the vessel and cargo appeared to be upright.

As to his having granted the permission without the knowledge of the commander-in-chief, though present in the camp, Arnold alleged that it was customary in the army for general officers to grant passes and protections to inhabitants of the United States, friendly to the same, and that the protection was given in the present instance, to prevent the soldiery from plundering the vessel and cargo, coming from a place in possession of the enemy, until the proper authority could take cognizance of the matter.

In regard to the second charge, while it was proved that under his authority wagons had been so used, it was allowed in extenuation, that they had been employed at private expense, and without any design to defraud the public or impede the military service.

In regard to both charges, nothing fraudulent on the part of Arnold was proved, but the transactions involved in the first were pronounced irregular, and contrary to one of the articles of war ; and in the second, imprudent and reprehensible, considering the high station

occupied by the general at the time; and the court sentenced him to be reprimanded by the commander-in-chief. The sentence was confirmed by Congress on the 12th of February (1780).

We have forborne to go into all the particulars of this trial, but we have considered them attentively, discharging from our minds, as much as possible, all impressions produced by Arnold's subsequent history, and we are surprised to find, after the hostility manifested against him by the council of Pennsylvania, and their extraordinary measure to possess the public mind against him, how venial are the trespasses of which he stood convicted.

He may have given personal offense by his assuming vanity; by the arrogant exercise of his military authority; he may have displeased by his ostentation, and awakened distrust by his speculating propensities; but as yet his patriotism was unquestioned. No turpitude had been proved against him; his brilliant exploits shed a splendor round his name, and he appeared before the public, a soldier crippled in their service. All these should have pleaded in his favor, should have produced indulgence of his errors, and mitigated that animosity which he always contended had been the cause of his ruin.

The reprimand adjudged by the court-martial was administered by Washington with consummate delicacy. The following were his words, as repeated by M. de Marbois, the French secretary of legation :

" Our profession is the chastest of all : even the shadow of a fault tarnishes the lustre of our finest achievements. The least inadvertence may rob us of the public favor, so hard to be acquired. I reprehend you for having forgotten, that, in proportion as you had rendered yourself formidable to our enemies, you should have been guarded and temperate in your deportment towards your fellow-citizens.

" Exhibit anew those noble qualities which have placed you on the list of our most valued commanders. I will myself furnish you, as far as it may be in my power, with opportunities of regaining the esteem of your country."

A reprimand so mild and considerate, accompanied by such high eulogiums and generous promises, might have had a favorable effect upon Arnold, had he been in a different frame of mind; but he had persuaded himself that the court would incline in his favor and acquit him altogether, and he resented deeply a sentence, which he protested against as unmer-

ited. His resentment was aggravated by delays in the settlement of his accounts, as he depended upon the sums he claimed as due to him, for the payment of debts by which he was harassed. In following the matter up, he became a weary, and probably irritable, applicant at the halls of Congress, and, we are told, gave great offense to members by his importunity, while he wore out the patience of his friends; but public bodies are prone to be offended by the importunity of baffled claimants, and the patience of friends is seldom proof against the reiterated story of a man's prolonged difficulties.

In the month of March, we find him intent on a new and adventurous project. He had proposed to the Board of Admiralty an expedition, requiring several ships of war and three or four hundred land troops, offering to take command of it should it be carried into effect, as his wounds still disabled him from duty on land. Washington, who knew his abilities in either service, was disposed to favor his proposition, but the scheme fell through from the impossibility of sparing the requisite number of men from the army. What Arnold's ultimate designs might have been in seeking such a command, are rendered problematical by his subsequent conduct. On the failure of the

project, he requested and obtained from Washington leave of absence from the army for the summer, there being, he said, little prospect of an active campaign, and his wounds unfitting him for the field.

Chapter XIX.

South Carolina Threatened—Its Condition and Population—Stormy Voyage of Sir Henry Clinton—Loss of Horses—Character of Lieutenant-Colonel Tarleton—Fleet Arrives at Tybee—Sir Henry Clinton Advances upon Charleston—Lincoln Prepares for Defense — Commodore Whipple — Governor Rutledge—Forebodings of Washington—Embarkation of British Troops at New York—Washington Sends De Kalb with Reinforcements—His Hopeful Letter to Steuben.

THE return of spring brought little alleviation to the sufferings of the army at Morristown. All means of supplying its wants or recruiting its ranks were paralyzed by the continued depreciation of the currency. While Washington saw his forces gradually diminishing, his solicitude was intensely excited for the safety of the Southern States. The reader will recall the departure from New York, in the latter part of December, of the fleet of Admiral Arbuthnot with the

army of Sir Henry Clinton, destined for the subjugation of South Carolina. "The richness of the country," says Colonel Tarleton, in his history of the campaign, "its vicinity to Georgia, and its distance from General Washington, pointed out the advantage and facility of its conquest. While it would be an unspeakable loss to the Americans, the possession of it would tend to secure to the crown the southern part of the continent which stretches beyond it." It was presumed that the subjugation of it would be an easy task. The population was scanty for the extent of the country, and was made up of emigrants, or the descendants of emigrants, from various lands and of various nations: Huguenots, who had emigrated from France after the revocation of the edict of Nantz; Germans, from the Palatinate; Irish Protestants, who had received grants of land from the crown; Scotch Highlanders, transported hither after the disastrous battle of Culloden; Dutch colonists, who had left New York, after its submission to England, and been settled here on bounty lands.

Some of these foreign elements might be hostile to British domination, but others would be favorable. There was a large class, too, that had been born or had passed much of their lives in England, who retained for it a filial

affection, spoke of it as *home*, and sent their children to be educated there.

The number of slaves within the province and of savages on its western frontier, together with its wide extent of unprotected sea-coast, were encouragements to an invasion by sea and land. Little combination of militia and yeomanry need be apprehended from a population sparsely scattered, and where the settlements were widely separated by swamps and forests. Washington was in no condition to render prompt and effectual relief, his army being at a vast distance, and considered, as "in a great measure broken up." The British, on the contrary, had the advantage of their naval force, "there being nothing then in the American seas which could even venture to look at it." *

Such were some of the considerations which prompted the enemy to this expedition; and which gave Washington great anxiety concerning it.

General Lincoln was in command at Charleston, but uncertain as yet of the designs of the enemy, and at a loss what course to pursue. Diffident of himself, and accustomed to defer to the wisdom of Washington, he turns to him in his present perplexity. "It is among my

* *Ann. Register*, 1780, p. 217.

misfortunes," writes he, modestly (January 23d), "that I am not near enough to your Excellency to have the advantage of your advice and direction. I feel my own insufficiency and want of experience. I can promise you nothing but a disposition to serve my country. If this town should be attacked, as now threatened, I know my duty will call me to defend it, as long as opposition can be of any avail. I hope my inclination will coincide with my duty."

The voyage of Sir Henry Clinton proved long and tempestuous. The ships were dispersed. Several fell into the hands of the Americans. One ordnance vessel foundered. Most of the artillery horses, and all those of the cavalry perished. The scattered ships rejoined each other about the end of January, at Tybee Bay on Savannah River, where those that had sustained damage were repaired as speedily as possible. The loss of the cavalry horses was especially felt by Sir Henry. There was a corps of two hundred and fifty dragoons, on which he depended greatly in the kind of guerrilla warfare he was likely to pursue, in a country of forests and morasses. Lieutenant-Colonel Banastre Tarleton who commanded them, was one of those dogs of war, which Sir Henry was prepared to let slip on emergen-

cies, to scour and maraud the country. This "bold dragoon," so noted in Southern warfare, was about twenty-six years of age, of a swarthy complexion, with small, black, piercing eyes. He is described as being rather below the middle size, square-built and strong, "with large muscular legs." It will be found that he was a first-rate partisan officer, prompt, ardent, active, but somewhat unscrupulous.

Landing from the fleet, perfectly dismounted, he repaired with his dragoons, in some of the quartermaster's boats, to Port Royal Island, on the seaboard of South Carolina, "to collect at that place, from friends or enemies, by money or by force, all the horses belonging to the islands in the neighborhood." He succeeded in procuring horses, though of an inferior quality to those he had lost, but consoled himself with the persuasion that he would secure better ones in the course of the campaign, by "exertion and enterprise,"—a vague phrase, but very significant in the partisan vocabulary.

In the meantime the transports, having on board a great part of the army, sailed under convoy on the 10th of February, from Savannah to North Edisto Sound, where the troops disembarked on the 11th, on St. John's Island, about thirty miles below Charleston. Thence, Sir Henry Clinton set out for the banks of

Ashley River, opposite to the city, while a part of the fleet proceeded round by sea, for the purpose of blockading the harbor. The advance of Sir Henry was slow and cautious. Much time was consumed by him in fortifying intermediate ports, to keep up a secure communication with the fleet. He ordered from Savannah all the troops that could be spared, and wrote to Knyphausen at New York, for reinforcements from that place. Every precaution was taken by him to insure against a second repulse from before Charleston, which might prove fatal to his military reputation.

General Lincoln took advantage of this slowness on the part of his assailant, to extend and strengthen the works. Charleston stands at the end of an isthmus formed by the Ashley and Cooper rivers. Beyond the main works on the land side he cut a canal, from one to the other of the swamps which border these rivers. In advance of the canal were two rows of abatis and a double picketed ditch. Within the canal, and between it and the main works, were strong redoubts and batteries, to open a flanking fire on any approaching column, while an inclosed hornwork of masonry formed a kind of citadel.

A squadron commanded by Commodore Whipple, and composed of nine vessels of war,

of various sizes, the largest mounting forty-four guns, was to co-operate with forts Moultrie and Johnston, and the various batteries, in the defense of the harbor. They were to lie before the bar so as to command the entrance of it. Great reliance also was placed on the bar itself, which it was thought no ship-of-the-line could pass.

Governor Rutledge, a man eminent for talents, patriotism, firmness, and decision, was clothed with dictatorial powers during the present crisis; he had called out the militia of the State, and it was supposed they would duly obey the call. Large reinforcements of troops also were expected from the North. Under all these circumstances, General Lincoln yielded to the entreaties of the inhabitants, and instead of remaining with his army in the open country, as he had intended, shut himself up with them in the place for its defense, leaving merely his cavalry and two hundred light troops outside, who were to hover about the enemy and prevent small parties from marauding.

It was not until the 12th of March that Sir Henry Clinton effected his tardy approach, and took up a position on Charleston Neck, a few miles above the town. Admiral Arbuthnot soon showed an intention of introducing

his ships into the harbor; barricading their waists, anchoring them in a situation where they might take advantage of the first favorable spring-tide, and fixing buoys on the bar for their guidance. Commodore Whipple had by this time ascertained by sounding that a wrong idea had prevailed of the depth of water in the harbor, and that his ships could not anchor nearer than within three miles of the bar, so that it would be impossible for him to defend the passage of it. He quitted his station within it, therefore, after having destroyed a part of the enemy's buoys, and took a position where his ships might be abreast, and form a cross-fire with the batteries of Fort Moultrie, where Colonel Pinckney commanded.

Washington was informed of these facts by letters from his former aide-de-camp, Colonel Laurens, who was in Charleston at the time. The information caused anxious forebodings. "The impracticability of defending the bar, I fear, amounts to the loss of the town and garrison," writes he in reply. "It really appears to me, that the propriety of attempting to defend the town, depended on the probability of defending the bar, and that when this ceased, the attempt ought to have been relinquished." The same opinion was expressed by him in a letter to Baron Steuben;

"but at this distance," adds he considerately, "we can form a very imperfect judgment of its propriety or necessity. I have the greatest reliance in General Lincoln's prudence, but I cannot forbear dreading the event."

His solicitude for the safety of the South was increased, by hearing of the embarkation at New York of two thousand five hundred British and Hessian troops, under Lord Rawdon, reinforcements for Sir Henry Clinton. It seemed evident the enemy intended to push their operations with vigor at the South; perhaps, to make it the principal theatre of the war. "We are now beginning," said Washington, "to experience the fatal consequences of the policy which delayed calling upon the States for their quotas of men in time to arrange and prepare them for the duties of the field. What to do for the Southern States, without involving consequences equally alarming in this quarter, I know not."

Gladly would he have hastened to the South in person, but at this moment his utmost vigilance was required to keep watch upon New York and maintain the security of the Hudson, the vital part of the confederacy. The weak state of the American means of warfare in both quarters, presented a choice of difficulties. The South needed support. Could the North

give it without exposing itself to ruin, since the enemy, by means of their ships, could suddenly unite their forces, and fall upon any point that they might consider weak? Such were the perplexities to which he was continually subjected, in having, with scanty means, to provide for the security of a vast extent of country, and with land forces merely, to contend with an amphibious enemy.

"Congress will better conceive in how delicate a situation we stand," writes he, "when I inform them, that the whole operating force present on this and the other side of the North River, amounts only to ten thousand four hundred rank and file, of which about two thousand eight hundred will have completed their term of service by the last of May; while the enemy's regular force at New York and its dependencies, must amount, upon a moderate calculation, to about eleven thousand rank and file. Our situation is more critical from the impossibility of concentrating our force, as well for the want of the means of taking the field, as on account of the early period of the season." *

Looking, however, as usual, to the good of the whole Union, he determined to leave something at hazard in the Middle States,

* Letter to the President, April 2d.

where the country was internally so strong, and yield further succor to the Southern States, which had not equal military advantages. With the consent of Congress, therefore, he put the Maryland line under marching orders, together with the Delaware regiment, which acted with it and the first regiment of artillery.

The Baron de Kalb, now at the head of the Maryland division, was instructed to conduct this detachment with all haste to the aid of General Lincoln. He might not arrive in time to prevent the fall of Charleston, but he might assist to arrest the progress of the enemy and save the Carolinas.

Washington had been put upon his guard of late against intrigues, forming by members of the old Conway Cabal, who intended to take advantage of every military disaster to destroy confidence in him. His steady mind, however, was not to be shaken by suspicion. "Against intrigues of this kind incident to every man of a public station," said he, "his best support will be a faithful discharge of his duty, and he must rely on the justice of his country for the event."

His feelings at the present juncture are admirably expressed in a letter to the Baron de Steuben. "The prospect, my dear Baron, is gloomy, and the storm threatens, but I hope

we shall extricate ourselves, and bring everything to a prosperous issue. I have been so inured to difficulties, in the course of this contest, that I have learned to look upon them with more tranquillity than formerly. Those which now present themselves, no doubt require vigorous exertions to overcome them, *and I am far from despairing of doing it.*" *

* *Washington's Writings*, vii., 10.

Chapter XX.

Evils of the Continental Currency—Military Reforms Proposed by Washington—Congress Jealous of Military Power—Committee of Three Sent to Confer with Washington—Losses by Depreciation of the Currency to be Made Good to the Troops—Arrival of Lafayette—Scheme for a Combined Attack upon New York—Arnold has Debts and Difficulties—His Proposals to the French Minister—Anxious to Return to the Army—Mutiny of the Connecticut Troops—Washington Writes to Reed for Aid from Pennsylvania—Good Effects of his Letter.

WE have cited the depreciation of the currency as a main cause of the difficulties and distresses of the army. The troops were paid in paper money at its nominal value. A memorial of the officers of the Jersey line to the legislature of their State, represented the depreciation to be so great, that four months' pay of a private soldier would not procure for his family a single bushel of wheat; the pay of a colonel

would not purchase oats for his horse, and a common laborer or express rider could earn four times the pay in paper of an American officer.

Congress, too, in its exigencies, being destitute of the power of levying taxes, which vested in the State governments, devolved upon those governments, in their separate capacities, the business of supporting the army. This produced a great inequality in the condition of the troops; according to the means and the degree of liberality of their respective States. Some States furnished their troops amply, not only with clothing, but with many comforts and conveniences; others were more contracted in their supplies; while others left their troops almost destitute. Some of the States, too, undertook to make good to their troops the loss in their pay caused by the depreciation of the currency. As this was not general, it increased the inequality of condition. Those who fared worse than others were incensed, not only against their own State, but against the confederacy. They were disgusted with a service that made such injurious distinctions. Some of the officers resigned, finding it impossible, under actual circumstances, to maintain an appearance suitable to their rank. The men had not this resource. They

murmured and showed a tendency to seditious combinations.

These, and other defects in the military system, were pressed by Washington upon the attention of Congress in a letter to the president: "It were devoutly to be wished," observed he, "that a plan could be devised by which everything relating to the army could be conducted on a general principle, under the direction of Congress. This alone can give harmony and consistency to our military establishment, and I am persuaded it will be infinitely conducive to public economy." *

In consequence of this letter it was proposed in Congress to send a committee of three of its members to headquarters to consult with the commander-in-chief, and, in conjunction with him, to effect such reforms and changes in the various departments of the army as might be deemed necessary. Warm debates ensued. It was objected that this would put too much power into a few hands, and especially into those of the commander-in-chief: "*that his influence was already too great; that even his virtues afforded motives for alarm; that the enthusiasm of the army, joined to the kind of dictatorship already confided to him, put Congress and the United States at his mercy; that it was*

* *Washington's Writings*, Sparks, vol. vii., p. ii.

not expedient to expose a man of highest virtues to such temptations." *

The foregoing passage from a despatch of the French minister to his government, is strongly illustrative of the cautious jealousy still existing in Congress with regard to military power, even though wielded by Washington.

After a prolonged debate, a committee of three was chosen by ballot; it consisted of General Schuyler and Messrs. John Matthews and Nathaniel Peabody. It was a great satisfaction to Washington to have his old friend and coadjutor, Schuyler, near him in this capacity, in which, he declared, no man could be more useful, "from his perfect knowledge of the resources of the country, the activity of his temper, his fruitfulness of expedients, and his sound military sense." †

The committee, on arriving at the camp, found the disastrous state of affairs had not been exaggerated. For five months the army had been unpaid. Every department was destitute of money or credit; there were rarely provisions for six days in advance; on some occasions the troops had been for several successive days without meat; there was no forage; the medical department had neither tea, choco-

* *Ibid.*, vii., p. 15.

† Washington to James Duane, Sparks, vii., 34.

late, wine, nor spirituous liquors of any kind. "Yet the men," said Washington, "have borne their distress in general, with a firmness and patience never exceeded, and every commendation is due to the officers for encouraging them to it by exhortation and example. They have suffered equally with the men, and, their relative situations considered, rather more." Indeed, we have it from another authority, that many officers for some time lived on bread and cheese, rather than take any of the scanty allowance of meat from the men.*

To soothe the discontents of the army, and counteract the alarming effects of the currency, Congress now adopted the measure already observed by some of the States, and engaged to make good to the continental and the independent troops the difference in the value of their pay caused by this depreciation; and that all moneys or other articles heretofore received by them, should be considered as advanced on account, and comprehended at their just value in the final settlement.

At this gloomy crisis came a letter from the Marquis de Lafayette, dated April 12th, announcing his arrival at Boston. Washington's eyes, we are told, were suffused with tears as

* Gen. William Laine to Joseph Reed. Reed's *Memoirs*, vol. ii., p. 201.

he read this most welcome epistle, and the warmth with which he replied to it, showed his affectionate regard for this young nobleman. "I received your letter," writes he, "with all the joy that the sincerest friendship could dictate, and with that impatience which an ardent desire to see you could not fail to inspire. . . . I most sincerely congratulate you on your safe arrival in America, and shall embrace you with all the warmth of an affectionate friend when you come to headquarters, where a bed is prepared for you."

He would immediately have sent a troop of horse to escort the marquis through the tory settlements between Morristown and the Hudson, had he known the route he intended to take; the latter, however, arrived safe at headquarters on the 12th of May, where he was welcomed with acclamations, for he was popular with both officers and soldiers. Washington folded him in his arms in a truly parental embrace, and they were soon closeted together to talk over the state of affairs, when Lafayette made known the result of his visit to France. His generous efforts at court had been crowned with success, and he brought the animating intelligence that a French fleet, under the Chevalier de Ternay, was to put to sea early in April, bring a body of troops under

the Count de Rochambeau, and might soon be expected on the coast to co-operate with the American forces; this, however, he was at liberty to make known only to Washington and Congress.

Remaining but a single day at headquarters, he hastened on to the seat of government, where he met the reception which his generous enthusiasm in the cause of American Independence had so fully merited. Congress, in a resolution on the 16th of May, pronounced his return to America to resume his command a fresh proof of the disinterested zeal and persevering attachment which had secured him the public confidence and applause, and received with pleasure a "tender of the further services of so gallant and meritorious an officer."

Within three days after the departure of the marquis from Morristown, Washington, in a letter to him, gave his idea of the plan which it would be proper for the French fleet and army to pursue on their arrival upon the coast. The reduction of New York he considered the first enterprise to be attempted by the co-operating forces. The whole effective land force of the enemy he estimated at about eight thousand regulars and four thousand refugees, with some militia, on which no great dependence could be placed. Their naval force consisted

of one seventy-four gun ship, and three or four small frigates. In this situation of affairs the French fleet might enter the harbor and gain possession of it without difficulty, cut off its communications, and, with the co-operation of the American army, oblige the city to capitulate. He advised Lafayette, therefore, to write to the French commanders, urging them, on their arrival on the coast, to proceed with their land and naval forces, with all expedition, to Sandy Hook, and there await further advices; should they learn, however, that the expedition under Sir Henry Clinton had returned from the South to New York, they were to proceed to Rhode Island.

General Arnold was at this time in Philadelphia, and his connection with subsequent events requires a few words concerning his career, daily becoming more perplexed. He had again petitioned Congress on the subject of his accounts. The Board of Treasury had made a report far short of his wishes. He had appealed, and his appeal, together with all the documents connected with the case, was referred to a committee of three. The old doubts and difficulties continued: there was no prospect of a speedy settlement; he was in extremity. The French minister, M. de Luzerne, was at hand; a generous-spirited man

who had manifested admiration of his military character. To him Arnold now repaired in his exigency; made a passionate representation of the hardships of his case; the inveterate hostility he had experienced from Pennsylvania; the ingratitude of his country; the disorder brought into his private affairs by the war, and the necessity he should be driven to of abandoning his profession, unless he could borrow a sum equal to the amount of his debts. Such a loan, he intimated, it might be the interest of the king of France to grant, thereby securing the attachment and gratitude of an American general of his rank and influence.

The French minister was too much of a diplomatist not to understand the bearing of the intimation, but he shrank from it, observing that the service required would degrade both parties.

"When the envoy of a foreign power," said he, "gives, or if you will, lends money, it is ordinarily to corrupt those who receive it, and to make them creatures of the sovereign whom he serves; or rather, he corrupts without persuading; he buys and does not secure. But the league entered into between the king and the United States, is the work of justice and of the wisest policy. It has for its basis a reciprocal interest and good-will. In the mission

with which I am charged, my true glory consists in fulfilling it without intrigue or cabal; without resorting to any secret practices, and by the force alone of the conditions of the alliance."

M. de Luzerne endeavored to soften this repulse and reproof, by complimenting Arnold on the splendor of his past career, and by alluding to the field of glory still before him; but the pressure of debts was not to be lightened by compliments, and Arnold retired from the interview, a mortified and desperate man.

He was in this mood when he heard of the expected arrival of aid from France, and the talk of an active campaign. It seemed as if his military ambition was once more aroused. To General Schuyler, who was about to visit the camp as one of the committee, he wrote on the 25th of May, expressing a determination to rejoin the army, although his wounds still made it painful to walk or ride, and intimated, that, in his present condition, the command at West Point would be best suited to him.

In reply, General Schuyler wrote from Morristown, June 2d, that he had put Arnold's letter into Washington's hands, and added: "He expressed a desire to do whatever was agreeable to you: dwelt on your abilities, your merits, your sufferings, and on the well-earned

claims you have on your country, and intimated, that as soon as his arrangements for the campaign should take place, he would properly consider you."

In the meantime, the army with which Washington was to co-operate in the projected attack upon New York, was so reduced by the departure of troops whose term had expired, and the tardiness in furnishing recruits, that it did not amount quite to four thousand rank and file, fit for duty. Among these was a prevalent discontent. Their pay was five months in arrear; if now paid, it would be in Continental currency, without allowance for depreciation, consequently, almost worthless for present purposes.

A long interval of scarcity and several days of actual famine, brought matters to a crisis. On the 15th of May, in the dusk of the evening, two regiments of the Connecticut line assembled on their parade by beat of drum, and declared their intention to march home bag and baggage, "or, at best, to gain subsistence at the point of the bayonet." Colonel Meigs, while endeavoring to suppress the mutiny, was struck by one of the soldiers. Some officers of the Pennsylvania line came to his assistance, parading their regiments. Every argument and expostulation was used with the muti-

neers. They were reminded of their past good conduct, of the noble objects for which they were contending, and of the future indemnifications promised by Congress. Their answer was, that their sufferings were too great to be allayed by promises, in which they had little faith; they wanted present relief, and some present substantial recompense for their services.

It was with difficulty they could be prevailed upon to return to their huts. Indeed, a few turned out a second time, with their packs, and were not to be pacified. These were arrested and confined.

This mutiny, Washington declared, had given him infinitely more concern than anything that had ever happened, especially as he had no means of paying the troops excepting in Continental money, which, said he, "is evidently impracticable from the immense quantity it would require to pay them as much as would make up the depreciation." His uneasiness was increased by finding that printed handbills were secretly disseminated in his camp by the enemy, containing addresses to the soldiery, persuading them to desert.*

* Letter to the President of Cong., May 27. Sparks, vii., 54.

In this alarming state of destitution, Washington looked around anxiously for bread for his famishing troops. New York, Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Maryland, were what he termed his "flour country." Virginia was sufficiently tasked to supply the South. New York, by legislative coercion, had already given all that she could spare from the subsistence of her inhabitants. Jersey was exhausted by the long residence of the army. Maryland had made great exertions, and might still do something more, and Delaware might contribute handsomely, in proportion to her extent: but Pennsylvania was now the chief dependence, for that State was represented to be full of flour. Washington's letter of the 16th of December, to President Reed, had obtained temporary relief from that quarter; he now wrote to him a second time, and still more earnestly, "Every idea you can form of our distresses, will fall short of the reality. There is such a combination of circumstances to exhaust the patience of the soldiery, that it begins at length to be worn out, and we see in every line of the army, features of mutiny and sedition. All our departments, all our operations, are at a stand, and unless a system very different from that which has a long time prevailed be immediately adopted throughout the States, our

affairs must soon become desperate beyond the possibility of recovery."

Nothing discouraged Washington more than the lethargy that seemed to deaden the public mind. He speaks of it with a degree of despondency scarcely ever before exhibited. "I have almost ceased to hope. The country is in such a state of insensibility and indifference to its interests that I dare not flatter myself with any change for the better." And again, "The present juncture is so interesting, that if it does not produce corresponding exertions, it will be a proof that motives of honor, public good, and even self-preservation, have lost their influence on our minds. This is a decisive moment; one of the most, I will go further, and say, *the* most important America has seen. The court of France has made a glorious effort for our deliverance, and if we disappoint its intentions by our supineness, we must become contemptible in the eyes of all mankind, nor can we after that venture to confide that our allies will persist in an attempt to establish what, it will appear, we want inclination or ability to assist them in." With these and similar observations, he sought to rouse President Reed to extraordinary exertions. "This is a time," writes he, "to hazard and to take a tone of energy and decision. All parties but

the disaffected will acquiesce in the necessity and give it their support." He urges Reed to press upon the Legislature of Pennsylvania the policy of investing its executive with plenipotentiary powers. "I should then," writes he, "expect everything from your ability and zeal. This is no time for formality or ceremony. The crisis in every point of view is extraordinary, and extraordinary expedients are necessary. I am decided in this opinion."

His letter procured relief for the army from the legislature, and a resolve empowering the president and council, during its recess, to declare martial law, should circumstances render it expedient. "This," observes Reed, "gives us a power of doing what may be necessary without attending to the ordinary course of law, and we shall endeavor to exercise it with prudence and moderation." *

In like manner Washington endeavored to rouse the dormant fire of Congress, and impart to it his own indomitable energy. "Certain I am," writes he to a member of that body, "unless Congress speak in a more decisive tone, unless they are vested with powers by the several States, competent to the purposes

* Sparks, *Corr. of the Rev.*, vol. ii., p. 466.

of war, or assume them as matters of right, and they and the States respectively act with more energy than they have hitherto done, that our cause is lost. We can no longer drudge on in the old way. By ill-timing the adoption of measures, by delays in the execution of them, or by unwarrantable jealousies, we incur enormous expenses and derive no benefit from them. One State will comply with a requisition of Congress; another neglects to do it; a third executes it by halves; and all differ, either in the manner, the matter, or so much in point of time, that we are always working up-hill; and, while such a system as the present one, or rather want of one, prevails, we shall ever be unable to apply our strength or resources to any advantage—I see one head gradually changing into thirteen, I see one army branching into thirteen, which, instead of looking up to Congress as the supreme controlling power of the United States, are considering themselves dependent on their respective States. In a word, I see the powers of Congress declining too fast for the consideration and respect which are due to them as the great representative body of America, and I am fearful of the consequences." *

*Letter to Joseph Jones. Sparks, vii., 67.

At this juncture came official intelligence from the South, to connect which with the general course of events, requires a brief notice of the operations of Sir Henry Clinton in that quarter.

Chapter XXII.

Siege of Charleston Continued—British Ships Enter the Harbor—British Troops March from Savannah—Tarleton and his Dragoons—His Brush with Colonel Washington—Charleston Reinforced by Woodford—Tarleton's Exploits at Monk's Corner—At Laneau's Ferry—Sir Henry Clinton Reinforced—Charleston Capitulates—Affair of Tarleton and Buford on the Waxhaw—Sir Henry Clinton Embarks for New York.

IN a preceding chapter we left the British fleet under Admiral Arbuthnot, preparing to force its way into the harbor of Charleston. Several days elapsed before the ships were able, by taking out their guns, provisions, and water, and availing themselves of wind and tide, to pass the bar. They did so on the 20th of March, with but slight opposition from several galleys. Commodore Whipple, then, seeing the vast superiority of their force, made a second retrograde move, stationing some of his ships in Cooper River, and sinking the rest at its mouth so as to prevent the

enemy from running up that river, and cutting off communication with the country on the east: the crews and heavy cannon were landed to aid in the defense of the town.

The reinforcements expected from the North were not yet arrived; the militia of the State did not appear at Governor Rutledge's command, and other reliances were failing. "Many of the North Carolina militia whose terms have expired leave us to-day," writes Lincoln to Washington, on the 20th of March. "They cannot be persuaded to remain longer, though the enemy are in our neighborhood." *

At this time the reinforcements which Sir Henry Clinton had ordered from Savannah were marching toward the Cambayee under Brigadier-General Patterson. On his flanks moved Major Ferguson with a corps of riflemen, and Major Cochrane with the infantry of the British legion, two brave and enterprising officers. It was a toilsome march, through swamps and difficult passes. Being arrived in the neighborhood of Port Royal, where Tarleton had succeeded, though indifferently, in remounting his dragoons, Patterson sent orders to that officer to join him. Tarleton hastened to obey the order. His arrival was timely. The Carolina militia having heard that all the

* *Correspondence of the Rev.*, vol. ii., p. 419.

G. R. Hall.

British horses had perished at sea, made an attack on the front of General Patterson's force, supposing it to be without cavalry. To their surprise, Tarleton charged them with his dragoons, routed them, took several prisoners, and, what was more acceptable, a number of horses, some of the militia, he says, "being accoutred as cavaliers."

Tarleton had soon afterwards to encounter a worthy antagonist in Colonel William Washington, the same cavalry officer who had distinguished himself at Trenton, and was destined to distinguish himself still more in this Southern campaign. He is described as being six feet in height, broad, stout, and corpulent. Bold in the field, careless in the camp, kind to his soldiers, harassing to his enemies, gay and good-humored, with an upright heart and a generous hand, a universal favorite. He was now at the head of a body of continental cavalry, consisting of his own and Bland's light horse, and Pulaski's hussars. A brush took place in the neighborhood of Rantoul's Bridge. Colonel Washington had the advantage, took several prisoners, and drove back the dragoons of the British legion, but durst not pursue them for want of infantry.*

* Gordon, vol. iii., p. 352; see also Tarleton, *Hist. Campaign*, p. 8.

On the 7th of April, Brigadier-General Woodford with seven hundred Virginia troops, after a forced march of five hundred miles in thirty days, crossed from the east side of Cooper River, by the only passage now open, and threw himself into Charleston. It was a timely reinforcement, and joyfully welcomed; for the garrison, when in greatest force, amounted to a little more than two thousand regulars and one thousand North Carolina militia.

About the same time Admiral Arbuthnot, in the *Roebuck*, passed Sullivan's Island, with a fresh southerly breeze, at the head of a squadron of seven armed vessels and two transports. "It was a magnificent spectacle, satisfactory to the royalists," writes the admiral. The whigs regarded it with a rueful eye. Colonel Pinckney opened a heavy cannonade from the batteries of Fort Moultrie. The ships thundered in reply, and clouds of smoke were raised, under the cover of which they slipped by, with no greater loss than twenty-seven men killed and wounded. A store-ship which followed the squadron ran aground, was set on fire and abandoned, and subsequently blew up. The ships took a position near Fort Johnston, just without the range of the shot from the American batteries. After the passage of the ships,

Colonel Pinckney and a part of the garrison withdrew from Fort Moultrie.

The enemy had by this time completed his first parallel, and the town being almost entirely invested by sea and land, received a joint summons from the British general and admiral to surrender. "Sixty days have passed," writes Lincoln in reply, "since it has been known that your intentions against this town were hostile, in which time has been afforded to abandon it, but duty and inclination point to the propriety of supporting it to the last extremity."

The British batteries were now opened. The siege was carried on deliberately by regular parallels, and on a scale of magnitude scarcely warranted by the moderate strength of the place. A great object with the besieged was to keep open the channel of communication with the country by the Cooper River, the last that remained by which they could receive reinforcements and supplies, or could retreat, if necessary. For this purpose, Governor Rutledge, leaving the town in the care of Lieutenant-Governor Gadsden, and one half of the executive council, set off with the other half, and endeavored to rouse the militia between the Cooper and Santee rivers. His success was extremely limited. Two militia posts

were established by him, one between these rivers, the other at a ferry on the Santee; some regular troops, also, had been detached by Lincoln to throw up works about nine miles above the town, on the Wando, a branch of Cooper River, and at Lempriere's Point; and Brigadier-General Huger,* with a force of militia and continental cavalry, including those of Colonel William Washington, was stationed at Monk's Corner, about thirty miles above Charleston, to guard the passes at the head waters of Cooper River.

Sir Henry Clinton, when proceeding with his second parallel, detached Lieutenant-Colonel Webster with fourteen hundred men to break up these posts. The most distant one was that of Huger's cavalry at Monk's Corner. The surprisal of this was intrusted to Tarleton, who, with his dragoons, was in Webster's advanced guard. He was to be seconded by Major Patrick Ferguson with his riflemen.

Ferguson was a fit associate for Tarleton, in hardy, scrambling, partisan enterprise; equally intrepid, and determined, but cooler and more open to impulses of humanity. He was the son of an eminent Scotch judge, had entered the army at an early age, and served in the German wars. The British extolled him as

* Pronounced Hugee—of French Huguenot descent.

superior to the American Indians, in the use of the rifle; in short, as being the best marksman living. He had invented one which could be loaded at the breech and discharged seven times in a minute. It had been used with effect by his corps. Washington, according to British authority, had owed his life at the battle of Germantown, solely to Ferguson's ignorance of his person, having repeatedly been within reach of the major's unerring rifle.*

On the evening of the 13th of April, Tarleton moved with the van toward Monk's Corner. A night march had been judged the most advisable. It was made in profound silence and by unfrequented roads. In the course of the march, a negro was descried attempting to avoid notice. He was seized. A letter was found on him from an officer in Huger's camp, from which Tarleton learned something of its situation and the distribution of the troops. A few dollars gained the services of the negro as a guide. The surprisal of General Huger's camp was complete. Several officers and men who attempted to defend themselves, were killed or wounded. General Huger, Colonel Washington, with many others, officers and men, escaped in the darkness, to the neighboring swamps. One hundred officers, dragoons,

* *Annual Register*, 1781, p. 52.

and hussars, were taken, with about four hundred horses and near fifty wagons, laden with arms, clothing, and ammunition.

Biggin's Bridge on Cooper River was likewise secured, and the way opened for Colonel Webster to advance nearly to the head of the passes, in such a manner as to shut up Charleston entirely.

In the course of the maraud which generally accompanies a surprisal of the kind, several dragoons of the British legion broke into a house in the neighborhood of Monk's Corner, and maltreated and attempted violence upon ladies residing there. The ladies escaped to Monk's Corner, where they were protected, and a carriage furnished to convey them to a place of safety. The dragoons were apprehended and brought to Monk's Corner, where by this time Colonel Webster had arrived. Major Ferguson, we are told, was for putting the dragoons to instant death, but Colonel Webster did not think his powers warranted such a measure. "They were sent to headquarters," adds the historian, "and, I believe, afterwards tried and whipped." *

We gladly record one instance in which the atrocities which disgraced this invasion met with some degree of punishment; and we

* Stedman, ii., 183.

honor the rough soldier, Ferguson, for the fiat of "instant death," with which he would have requited the most infamous and dastardly outrage that brutalizes warfare.

During the progress of the siege, General Lincoln held repeated councils of war, in which he manifested a disposition to evacuate the place. This measure was likewise urged by General Du Portail, who had penetrated, by secret ways, into the town. The inhabitants, however, in an agony of alarm, implored Lincoln not to abandon them to the mercies of an infuriated and licentious soldiery, and the general, easy and kind-hearted, yielded to their entreaties.

The American cavalry had gradually reassembled on the north of the Santee, under Colonel White of New Jersey, where they were joined by some militia infantry, and by Colonel William Washington, with such of his dragoons as had escaped at Monk's Corner. Cornwallis had committed the country between Cooper and Wando rivers to Tarleton's charge, with orders to be continually on the move with the cavalry and infantry of the legion; to watch over the landing-places; obtain intelligence from the town, the Santee River, and the back country, and to burn such stores as might fall into his hands,

rather than risk their being retaken by the enemy.

Hearing of the fortuitous assemblage of American troops, Tarleton came suddenly upon them by surprise at Laneau's Ferry. It was one of his bloody exploits. Five officers and thirty-six men were killed and wounded, and seven officers and six dragoons taken, with horses, arms, and equipments. Colonels White, Washington, and Jamieson, with other officers and men, threw themselves into the river, and escaped by swimming; while some, who followed their example, perished.

The arrival of a reinforcement of three thousand men from New York enabled Sir Henry to throw a powerful detachment, under Lord Cornwallis, to the east of Cooper River, to complete the investment of the town and cut off all retreat. Fort Moultrie surrendered. The batteries of the third parallel were opened upon the town. They were so near, that the Hessian yagers, or sharp-shooters, could pick off the garrison while at their guns or on the parapets. This fire was kept up for two days. The besiegers crossed the canal; pushed up a double sap to the inside of the abatis, and prepared to make an assault by sea and land.

All hopes of successful defense were at an end. The works were in ruins; the guns

almost all dismounted ; the garrison exhausted with fatigue, the provisions nearly consumed. The inhabitants, dreading the horrors of an assault, joined in a petition to General Lincoln, and prevailed upon him to offer a surrender on terms which had already been offered and rejected. These terms were still granted, and the capitulation was signed on the 12th of May. The garrison were allowed some of the honors of war. They were to march out and deposit their arms, between the canal and the works, but the drums were not to beat a British march nor the colors to be uncased. The continental troops and seamen were allowed their baggage, but were to remain prisoners of war. The officers of the army and navy were to retain their servants, swords, and pistols, and their baggage unsearched ; and were permitted to sell their horses ; but not to remove them out of the town. The citizens and the militia were to be considered prisoners on parole ; the latter to be permitted to return home, and both to be protected in person and property as long as they kept their parole. Among the prisoners were the lieutenant-governor and five of the council.

The loss of the British in the siege was seventy-six killed and one hundred and eighty-nine wounded ; that of the Americans nearly

the same. The prisoners taken by the enemy, exclusive of the sailors, amounted to five thousand six hundred and eighteen men; comprising every male adult in the city. The continental troops did not exceed two thousand, five hundred of whom were in the hospital; the rest were citizens and militia.

Sir Henry Clinton considered the fall of Charleston decisive of the fate of South Carolina. To complete the subjugation of the country, he planned three expeditions into the interior. One, under Lieutenant-Colonel Brown, was to move up the Savannah River to Augusta, on the borders of Georgia. Another, under Lieutenant-Colonel Cruger, was to proceed up the southwest side of the Santee River to the district of Ninety-Six,* a fertile and salubrious region, between the Savannah and the Saluda rivers: while a third, under Cornwallis, was to cross the Santee, march up the northeast bank, and strike at a corps of troops under Colonel Buford, which were retreating to North Carolina with artillery and a number of wagons, laden with arms, ammunition, and clothing.

Colonel Buford, in fact, had arrived too late for the relief of Charleston, and was now mak-

* So called in early times from being ninety-six miles from the principal town of the Cherokee nation.

ing a retrograde move; he had come on with three hundred and eighty troops of the Virginia line, and two field-pieces, and had been joined by Colonel Washington with a few of his cavalry that had survived the surprisal by Tarleton. As Buford was moving with celerity, and had the advantage of distance, Cornwallis detached Tarleton in pursuit of him, with one hundred and seventy dragoons, a hundred mounted infantry and a three-pounder. The bold partisan pushed forward with his usual ardor and rapidity. The weather was sultry, many of his horses gave out through fatigue and heat; he pressed others by the way, leaving behind such of his troops as could not keep pace with him. After a day and night of forced march, he arrived about dawn at Rugeley's Mills. Buford, he was told, was about twenty miles in advance of him, pressing on with all diligence to join another corps of Americans. Tarleton continued his march; the horses of the three-pounder were knocked up and unable to proceed; his wearied troops were continually dropping in the rear. Still he urged forward, anxious to overtake Buford before he could form a junction with the force he was seeking. To detain him he sent forward Captain Kinlock of his legion with a flag, and the following letter:—

"Sir,—Resistance being vain, to prevent the effusion of blood, I make offers which can never be repeated. You are now almost encompassed by a corps of seven hundred light troops on horseback; half of that number are infantry with cannons. Earl Cornwallis is likewise within reach with nine British regiments. I warn you of the temerity of further inimical proceedings."

He concluded by offering the same conditions granted to the troops at Charleston; "if you are rash enough to reject them," added he, "the blood be upon your head."

Kinlock overtook Colonel Buford in full march on the banks of the Waxhaw, a stream on the border of North Carolina, and delivered the summons. The colonel read the letter without coming to a halt, detaining the flag for some time in conversation, and then returned the following note:—

"Sir,—I reject your proposals, and shall defend myself to the last extremity.

"I have the honor," etc.

Tarleton, who had never ceased to press forward, came upon Buford's rear-guard about three o'clock in the afternoon, and captured a sergeant and four dragoons. Buford had not expected so prompt an approach of the enemy.

He hastily drew up his men in order of battle, in an open wood, on the right of the road. His artillery and wagons, which were in the advance, escorted by part of his infantry, were ordered to continue on their march.

There appears to have been some confusion on the part of the Americans, and they had an impetuous foe to deal with. Before they were well prepared for action they were attacked in front and on both flanks by cavalry and mounted infantry. Tarleton, who advanced at the head of thirty chosen dragoons and some infantry, states that when within fifty paces of the continental infantry, they presented, but he heard their officers command them to retain their fire until the British cavalry were nearer. It was not until the latter were within ten yards that there was a partial discharge of musketry. Several of the dragoons suffered by this fire. Tarleton himself was unhorsed, but his troopers rode on. The American battalion was broken; most of the men threw down their arms and begged for quarter, but were cut down without mercy. One hundred and thirteen were slain on the spot, and one hundred and fifty so mangled and maimed that they could not be removed. Colonel Buford and a few of the cavalry escaped, as did about a hundred of the infantry, who were with the baggage in the

advance. Fifty prisoners were all that were in a condition to be carried off by Tarleton as trophies of this butchery.

The whole British loss was two officers and three privates killed, and one officer and fourteen privates wounded. What, then, could excuse this horrible carnage of an almost prostrate enemy? We give Tarleton's own excuse for it. It commenced, he says, at the time he was dismounted, and before he could mount another horse; and his cavalry were exasperated by a report that he was slain. Cornwallis apparently accepted this excuse, for he approved of his conduct in the expedition, and recommended him as worthy of some distinguished mark of royal favor. The world at large, however, have not been so easily satisfied, and the massacre at the Waxhaw has remained a sanguinary stain on the reputation of that impetuous soldier.

The two other detachments which had been sent out by Clinton, met with nothing but submission. The people in general, considering resistance hopeless, accepted the proffered protection, and conformed to its humiliating terms. One class of the population in this colony seems to have regarded the invaders as deliverers. "All the negroes," writes Tarleton, "men, women, and children, upon the appear-

ance of any detachment of king's troops, thought themselves absolved from all respect to their American masters, and entirely released from servitude. They quitted the plantations and followed the army." *

Sir Henry now persuaded himself that South Carolina was subdued, and proceeded to station garrisons in various parts, to maintain it in subjection. In the fulness of his confidence, he issued a proclamation on the 3d of June, discharging all the military prisoners from their paroles after the 20th of the month, excepting those captured in Fort Moultrie and Charleston. All thus released from their parole were reinstated in the rights and duties of British subjects; but, at the same time, they were bound to take an active part in support of the government hitherto opposed by them. Thus the protection afforded them while prisoners was annulled by an arbitrary fiat—neutrality was at an end. All were to be ready to take up arms at a moment's notice. Those who had families were to form a militia for home defense. Those who had none, were to serve with the royal forces. All who should neglect to return to their allegiance, or should refuse to take up arms against the independence

* Tarleton's *Hist. of Campaign*, p. 89.

of their country were to be considered as rebels and treated accordingly.

Having struck a blow, which, as he conceived, was to insure the subjugation of the South, Sir Henry embarked for New York on the 5th of June, with a part of his forces, leaving the residue under the command of Lord Cornwallis, who was to carry the war into North Carolina, and thence into Virginia.

Chapter XXIII.

Knyphausen Marauds the Jerseys—Sacking of Connecticut Farms—Murder of Mrs. Caldwell—Arrival and Movements of Sir Henry Clinton—Springfield Burnt—The Jerseys Evacuated.

A HANDBILL, published by the British authorities in New York, reached Washington's camp on the 1st of June, and made known the surrender of Charleston. A person from Amboy reported, moreover, that on the 30th of May he had seen one hundred sail of vessels enter Sandy Hook. These might bring Sir Henry Clinton with the whole or part of his force. In that case, flushed with his recent success, he might proceed immediately up the Hudson, and make an attempt upon West Point, in the present distressed condition of the garrison. So thinking, Washington wrote to General Howe, who commanded that important post, to put him on his guard, and took measures to have him furnished with supplies.

The report concerning the fleet proved to be erroneous, but on the 6th of June came a new alarm. The enemy, it was said, were actually landing in force at Elizabethtown Point, to carry fire and sword into the Jerseys!

It was even so. Knyphausen, through spies and emissaries, had received exaggerated accounts of the recent outbreak in Washington's camp, and of the general discontent among the people of New Jersey; and was persuaded that a sudden show of military protection, following up the news of the capture of Charleston, would produce a general desertion among Washington's troops, and rally back the inhabitants of the Jerseys to their allegiance to the crown.

In this belief he projected a descent into the Jerseys with about five thousand men, and some light artillery, who were to cross in divisions in the night of the 5th of June from Staten Island to Elizabethtown Point.

The first division, led by Brigadier-General Sterling, actually landed before dawn of the 6th, and advanced as silently as possible. The heavy and measured tramp of the troops, however, caught the ear of an American sentinel stationed at a fork where the roads from the old and new point joined. He challenged the dimly descried mass as it approached, and re-

ceiving no answer, fired into it. That shot wounded General Sterling in the thigh, and ultimately proved mortal. The wounded general was carried back, and Knyphausen took his place.

This delayed the march until sunrise, and gave time for the troops of the Jersey line, under Colonel Elias Dayton, stationed in Elizabethtown, to assemble. They were too weak in numbers, however, to withstand the enemy, but retreated in good order, skirmishing occasionally. The invading force passed through the village; in the advance, a squadron of dragoons of Simcoe's regiment of Queen's Rangers, with drawn swords and glittering helmets, followed by British and Hessian infantry.*

Signal guns and signal fires were rousing the country. The militia and yeomanry armed themselves with such weapons as were at hand, and hastened to their alarm posts. The enemy took the old road, by what was called Galloping Hill, toward the village of Connecticut Farms; fired upon them from behind walls and thickets by the hasty levies of the country.

At Connecticut Farms, the retreating troops under Dayton fell in with the Jersey brigade,

* Passages in the History of Elizabethtown, Capt. W. C. De Hart.

under General Maxwell, and, a few militia joining them, the Americans were enabled to make some stand, and even to hold the enemy in check. The latter, however, brought up several field-pieces, and being reinforced by a second division which had crossed from Staten Island some time after the first, compelled the Americans again to retreat. Some of the enemy, exasperated at the unexpected opposition they had met with throughout their march, and pretending that the inhabitants of this village had fired upon them from their windows, began to pillage and set fire to the houses. It so happened that to this village the Rev. James Caldwell, "the rousing gospel preacher," had removed his family as to a place of safety, after his church at Elizabethtown had been burnt down by the British in January. On the present occasion he had retreated with the regiment to which he was chaplain. His wife, however, remained at the parsonage with her two youngest children, confiding in the protection of Providence, and the humanity of the enemy.

When the sacking of the village took place, she retired with her children into a back room of the house. Her infant of eight months was in the arms of an attendant; she herself was seated on the side of a bed holding a child of

three years by the hand, and was engaged in prayer. All was terror and confusion in the village; when suddenly a musket was discharged in at the window. Two balls struck her in the breast, and she fell dead on the floor. The parsonage and church were set on fire, and it was with difficulty her body was rescued from the flames.

In the meantime Knyphausen was pressing on with his main force towards Morristown. The booming of alarm guns had roused the country; every valley was pouring out its yeomanry. Two thousand were said to be already in arms below the mountains.

Within half a mile of Springfield, Knyphausen halted to reconnoiter. That village, through which passes the road to Springfield, had been made the American rallying-point. It stands at the foot of what are called the Short Hills, on the west side of Rahway River, which runs in front of it. On the bank of the river, General Maxwell's Jersey brigade and the militia of the neighborhood were drawn up to dispute the passage; and on the Short Hills in the rear was Washington with the main body of his forces, not mutinous and in confusion, but all in good order, strongly posted, and ready for action.

Washington had arrived and taken his posi-

tion that afternoon, prepared to withstand an encounter, though not to seek one. All night his camp fires lighted up the Short Hills, and he remained on the alert, expecting to be assailed in the morning; but in the morning no enemy was to be seen.

Knyphausen had experienced enough to convince him that he had been completely misinformed as to the disposition of the Jersey people and of the army. Disappointed as to the main objects of his enterprise, he had retreated under cover of the night, to the place of his debarkation, intending to recross to Staten Island immediately.

In the camp at the Short Hills was the Reverend James Caldwell, whose home had been laid desolate. He was still ignorant of the event, but had passed a night of great anxiety, and, procuring the protection of a flag, hastened back in the morning to Connecticut Farms. He found the village in ashes, and his wife a mangled corpse!

In the course of the day Washington received a letter from Colonel Alexander Hamilton, who was reconnoitering in the neighborhood of Elizabethtown Point. "I have seen the enemy," writes he. "Those in view I calculate at about three thousand. There may be, and probably are, enough others out of sight.

They have sent all their horses to the other side except about fifty or sixty. Their baggage has also been sent across, and their wounded. It is not ascertained that any of their infantry have passed on the other side. . . . The present movement may be calculated to draw us down and betray us into an action. They may have desisted from their intention of passing till night, for fear of our falling upon their rear."

As Washington was ignorant of the misinformation which had beguiled Knyphausen into this enterprise, the movements of that general, his sudden advance, and as sudden retreat, were equally inexplicable. At one time, he supposed his inroad to be a mere foraging incursion; then, as Hamilton had suggested, a device to draw him down from his stronghold into the plain, where the superiority of the British force would give them the advantage.

Knyphausen, in fact, had been impeded in crossing his troops to Staten Island, by the low tide and deep muddy shore, which rendered it difficult to embark the cavalry; and by a destructive fire kept up by militia posted along the river banks, and the adjacent woods. In the meanwhile he had time to reflect on the ridicule that would await him in New York,

should his expedition prove fruitless, and end in what might appear a precipitate flight. This produced indecision of mind, and induced him to recall the troops which had already crossed, and which were necessary, he said, to protect his rear.

For several days he lingered with his troops at Elizabethtown and the Point beyond; obliging Washington to exercise unremitting vigilance for the safety of the Jerseys and of the Hudson. It was a great satisfaction to the latter to be joined by Major Henry Lee, who with his troop of horse had hastened on from the vicinity of Philadelphia, where he had recently been stationed.

In the meantime, the tragical fate of Mrs. Caldwell produced almost as much excitement throughout the country as that which had been caused in a preceding year, by the massacre of Miss McCrea. She was connected with some of the first people of New Jersey; was winning in person and character, and universally beloved. Knyphausen was vehemently assailed in the American papers, as if responsible for this atrocious act. The enemy, however, attributed her death to a random shot, discharged in a time of confusion, or to the vengeance of a menial who had a deadly pique against her husband; but the popular voice

persisted in execrating it as the wilful and wanton act of a British soldier.

On the 17th of June the fleet from the South actually arrived in the bay of New York, and Sir Henry Clinton landed his troops on Staten Island; but almost immediately re-embarked them, as if meditating an expedition up the river.

Fearing for the safety of West Point, Washington set off on the 21st June, with the main body of his troops, towards Pompton; while General Greene, with Maxwell and Stark's brigades, Lee's dragoons and the militia of the neighborhood, remained encamped on the Short Hills, to cover the country and protect the stores at Morristown.

Washington's movements were slow and wary, unwilling to be far from Greene until better informed of the designs of the enemy. At Rockaway Bridge, about eleven miles beyond Morristown, he received word on the 23d, that the enemy were advancing from Elizabethtown against Springfield. Supposing the military depot at Morristown to be their ultimate object, he detached a brigade to the assistance of Greene, and fell back five or six miles, so as to be in supporting distance of him.

The re-embarkation of the troops at Staten Island had, in fact, been a stratagem of Sir

Henry Clinton to divert the attention of Washington, and enable Knyphausen to carry out the enterprise which had hitherto hung fire. No sooner did the latter ascertain that the American commander-in-chief had moved off with his main force towards the Highlands, than he sallied from Elizabethtown five thousand strong, with a large body of cavalry, and fifteen or twenty pieces of artillery; hoping not merely to destroy the public stores at Morristown, but to get possession of those difficult hills and defiles, among which Washington's army had been so securely posted, and which constituted the strength of that part of the country.

It was early on the morning of the 23d that Knyphausen pushed forward toward Springfield. Besides the main road which passes directly through the village toward Morristown, there is another, north of it, called the Vauxhall road, crossing several small streams, the confluence of which forms the Rahway. These two roads unite beyond the village in the principal pass of the Short Hills. The enemy's troops advanced rapidly in two compact columns, the right one by the Vauxhall road, the other by the main or direct road. General Greene was stationed among the Short Hills, about a mile above the town. His troops were

distributed at various posts, for there were many passes to guard.

At five o'clock in the morning, signal-guns gave notice of the approach of the enemy. The drums beat to arms throughout the camp. The troops were hastily called in from their posts among the mountain passes, and preparations were made to defend the village.

Major Lee, with his dragoons and a picket-guard, was posted on the Vauxhall road, to check the right column of the enemy in its advance. Colonel Dayton, with his regiment of New Jersey militia, was to check the left column on the main road. Colonel Angel of Rhode Island, with about two hundred picked men, and a piece of artillery, was to defend a bridge over the Rahway, a little west of the town. Colonel Shreve, stationed with his regiment at a second bridge over a branch of the Rahway east of the town, was to cover, if necessary, the retreat of Colonel Angel. Those parts of Maxwell and Stark's brigades which were not thus detached, were drawn up on high grounds in the rear of the town, having the militia on their flanks.

There was some sharp fighting at a bridge on the Vauxhall road, where Major Lee with his dragoons and picket-guard held the right column at bay; a part of the column, however,

forded the stream above the bridge, gained a commanding position, and obliged Lee to retire.

The left column met with similar opposition from Dayton and his Jersey regiment. None showed more ardor in the fight than Caldwell the chaplain. The image of his murdered wife was before his eyes. Finding the men in want of wadding, he galloped to the Presbyterian church and brought thence a quantity of Watts' psalm and hymn books, which he distributed for the purpose among the soldiers. "Now," cried he, "put Watts into them, boys!"

The severest fighting of the day was at the bridge over the Rahway. For upwards of half an hour Colonel Angel defended it with his handful of men against a vastly superior force. One fourth of his men were either killed or disabled: the loss of the enemy was still more severe. Angel was at length compelled to retire. He did so in good order, carrying off his wounded, and making his way through the village to the bridge beyond it. Here his retreat was bravely covered by Colonel Shreve, but he too was obliged to give way before the overwhelming force of the enemy, and join the brigades of Maxwell and Stark upon the hill.

General Greene, finding his front too much extended for his small force, and that he was

in danger of being outflanked on the left by the column pressing forward on the Vauxhall road, took post with his main body on the first range of hills, where the roads were brought near to a point, and passed between him and the height occupied by Stark and Maxwell. He then threw out a detachment which checked the farther advance of the right column of the enemy along the Vauxhall road, and secured that pass through the Short Hills. Feeling himself now strongly posted, he awaited with confidence the expected attempt of the enemy to gain the height. No such attempt was made. The resistance already experienced, especially at the bridge, and the sight of militia gathering from various points, dampened the ardor of the hostile commander. He saw that, should he persist in pushing for Morristown, he would have to fight his way through a country abounding with difficult passes, every one of which would be obstinately disputed; and that the enterprise, even if successful, might cost too much, besides taking him too far from New York, at a time when a French armament might be expected.

Before the brigade detached by Washington arrived at the scene of action, therefore, the enemy had retreated. Previous to their retreat they wreaked upon Springfield the same

vengeance they had inflicted on Connecticut Farms. The whole village, excepting four houses, was reduced to ashes. Their second retreat was equally ignoble with their first. They were pursued and harassed the whole way to Elizabethtown by light scouting parties and by the militia and yeomanry of the country, exasperated by the sight of the burning village. Lee, too, came upon their rear-guard with his dragoons, captured a quantity of stores abandoned by them in the hurry of retreat, and made prisoners of several refugees.

It was sunset when the enemy reached Elizabethtown. During the night they passed over to Staten Island by their bridge of boats. By six o'clock in the morning all had crossed, and the bridge had been removed—and the State of New Jersey, so long harassed by the campaignings of either army, was finally evacuated by the enemy. It had proved a school of war to the American troops. The incessant marchings and counter-marchings; the rude encampments; the exposures to all kinds of hardship and privation; the alarms; the stratagems; the rough encounters and adventurous enterprises of which this had been the theatre for the last three or four years, had rendered the patriot soldier hardy, adroit, and long-suffering; had accustomed him to danger,

inured him to discipline, and brought him nearly on a level with the European mercenary in the habitudes and usages of arms, while he had the superior incitements of home, country, and independence. The ravaging incursions of the enemy had exasperated the most peace-loving parts of the country; made soldiers of the husbandmen, acquainted them with their own powers, and taught them that the foe was vulnerable. The recent ineffectual attempts of a veteran general to penetrate the fastnesses of Morristown, though at the head of a veteran force, "which would once have been deemed capable of sweeping the whole continent before it," was a lasting theme of triumph to the inhabitants; and it is still the honest boast among the people of Morris County, that "the enemy never were able to get a footing among our hills." At the same time the conflagration of villages, by which they sought to cover or revenge their repeated failures, and their precipitate retreat, harassed and insulted by half-disciplined militia, and a crude, rustic levy, formed an ignominious close to the British campaign in the Jerseys.

Chapter XXIII.

Washington Applies to the State Legislatures for Aid — Subscriptions of the Ladies of Philadelphia — Gates Appointed to Command the Southern Department—French Fleet Arrives at Newport—Preparation for a Combined Movement against New York —Arnold Obtains Command at West Point—Greene Resigns the Office of Quartermaster-General.

APPREHENSIVE that the next move of the enemy would be up the Hudson, Washington resumed his measures for the security of West Point; moving towards the Highlands in the latter part of June. Circumstances soon convinced him that the enemy had no present intention of attacking that fortress, but merely menaced him at various points, to retard his operations, and oblige him to call out the militia; thereby interrupting agriculture, distressing the country, and rendering his cause unpopular. Having, therefore, caused the military stores in the Jerseys to be removed to more remote and

secure places, he countermanded by letter the militia, which were marching to camp from Connecticut and Massachusetts.

He now exerted himself to the utmost to procure from the different State Legislatures their quotas and supplies for the regular army. "The sparing system," said he, "has been tried until it has brought us to a crisis a little less than desperate." This was the time by one great exertion to put an end to the war. The basis of everything was the completion of the continental battalions to their full establishment; otherwise, nothing decisive could be attempted, and this campaign, like all the former, must be chiefly defensive. He warned against those "indolent and narrow politicians, who, except at the moment of some signal misfortune, are continually crying, *all is well*, and who to save a little present expense, and avoid some temporary inconvenience, with no ill designs in the main, would protract the war, and risk the perdition of our liberties." *

The desired relief, however, had to be effected through the ramifications of general and State governments, and their committees. The operations were tardy and unproductive. Liberal contributions were made by individuals, a bank was established by the inhabitants

* Letter to Governor Trumbull. Sparks, vii., 93.

of Philadelphia to facilitate the supplies of the army, and an association of ladies of that city raised by subscription between seven and eight thousand dollars, which were put at the disposition of Washington, to be laid out in such a manner as he might think "most honorable and gratifying to the brave old soldiers who had borne so great a share of the burden of the war."

The capture of General Lincoln at Charleston had left the Southern department without a commander-in-chief. As there were likely to be important military operations in that quarter, Washington had intended to recommend General Greene for the appointment. He was an officer on whose abilities, discretion, and disinterested patriotism he had the fullest reliance, and whom he had always found thoroughly disposed to act in unison with him in his general plan of carrying on the war. Congress, however, with unbecoming precipitancy, gave that important command to General Gates (June 13th), without waiting to consult Washington's views or wishes.

Gates, at the time, was on his estate in Virginia, and accepted the appointment with avidity, anticipating new triumphs. His old associate, General Lee, gave him an ominous caution at parting. "Beware that your North-

ern laurels do not change to Southern willows!"

On the 10th of July a French fleet, under the Chevalier de Ternay, arrived at Newport, in Rhode Island. It was composed of seven ships of the line, two frigates and two bombs, and convoyed transports on board of which there were upwards of five thousand troops. This was the first division of the forces promised by France, of which Lafayette had spoken. The second division had been detained at Brest for want of transports, but might soon be expected.

The Count de Rochambeau, lieutenant-general of the royal armies, was commander-in-chief of this auxiliary force. He was a veteran, fifty-five years of age, who had early distinguished himself, when colonel of the regiment of Auvergne, and had gained laurels in various battles, especially that of Kloster Camp, of which he decided the success. Since then, he had risen from one post of honor to another, until intrusted with his present important command.*

Another officer of rank and distinction in this force, was Major-General the Marquis de Chastellux, a friend and relative of Lafayette,

*Jean Baptiste Donatien de Vimeur, Comte de Rochambeau, was born at Vendome, in France, 1725.

but much his senior, being now forty-six years of age. He was not only a soldier, but a man of letters, and one famliar with courts as well as camps.

Count Rochambeau's first despatch to Vergennes, the French Minister of State (July 16th) gave a discouraging picture of affairs. "Upon my arrival here," writes he, "the country was in consternation, the paper money had fallen to sixty for one, and even the government takes it up at forty for one. Washington had for a long time only three thousand men under his command. The arrival of the Marquis de Lafayette, and the announcement of succors from France, afforded some encouragement; but the tories, who were very numerous, gave out that it was only a temporary assistance, like that of Count D'Estaing. "In describing to you our reception at this place, we shall show you the feeling of all the inhabitants of the continent. This town is of considerable size, and contains, like the rest, both whigs and tories. I landed with my staff, without troops; nobody appeared in the streets; those at the windows looked sad and depressed. I spoke to the principal persons of the place, and told them, as I wrote to General Washington, that this was merely the advanced guard of a greater force, and that the king was

determined to support them with his whole power. In twenty-four hours their spirits rose, and last night all the streets, houses, and steeples were illuminated, in the midst of fireworks, and the greatest rejoicings. I am now here with a single company of grenadiers, until wood and straw shall have been collected; my camp is marked out, and I hope to have the troops landed to-morrow."

Still, however, there appears to have been a lingering feeling of disappointment in the public bosom. "The whigs are pleased," writes De Rochambeau, "but they say that the king ought to have sent twenty thousand men and twenty ships to drive the enemy from New York; that the country was infallibly ruined; that it is impossible to find a recruit to send to General Washington's army, without giving him one hundred hard dollars to engage for six months' service, and they beseech His Majesty to assist them with all his strength. The war will be an expensive one; we pay even for our quarters, and for the land covered with the camp." *

The troops were landed to the east of the town; their encampment was on a fine situation, and extended nearly across the island. Much was said of their gallant and martial

* Sparks. *Writings of Washington*, vii., 504.

appearance. There was the noted regiment of Auvergne, in command of which the Count de Rochambeau had first gained his laurels, but which was now commanded by his son the viscount, thirty years of age. A legion of six hundred men also was especially admired; it was commanded by the Duke de Lauzun (Lauzun-Biron), who had gained reputation in the preceding year by the capture of Senegal. A feeling of adventure and romance, associated with the American struggle, had caused many of the young nobility to seek this new field of achievement, who, to use De Rochambeau's words, "brought out with them the heroic and chivalrous courage of the ancient French nobility." To their credit be it spoken also, they brought with them the ancient French politeness, for it was remarkable how soon they accommodated themselves to circumstances, made light of all the privations and inconveniences of a new country, and conformed to the familiar simplicity of republican manners. General Heath, who, by Washington's orders, was there to offer his services, was, by his own account, "charmed with the officers," who, on their part, he said, expressed the highest satisfaction with the treatment they received.

The instructions of the French ministry to the Count de Rochambeau placed him entirely

under the command of General Washington. The French troops were to be considered as auxiliaries, and as such were to take the left of the American troops, and, in all cases of ceremony, to yield them the preference. This considerate arrangement had been adopted at the suggestion of the Marquis de Lafayette, and was intended to prevent the recurrence of those questions of rank and etiquette which had heretofore disturbed the combined service.

Washington, in general orders, congratulated the army on the arrival of this timely and generous succor, which he hailed as a new tie between France and America; anticipating that the only contention between the two armies would be to excel each other in good offices, and in the display of every military virtue. The American cockade had hitherto been black, that of the French was white; he recommended to his officers a cockade of black and white intermingled in compliment to their allies, and as a symbol of friendship and union.

His joy at this important reinforcement was dashed by the mortifying reflection, that he was still unprovided with the troops and military means requisite for the combined operations meditated. Still he took upon himself the responsibility of immediate action, and forthwith despatched Lafayette to have an

interview with the French commanders, explain the circumstances of the case, and concert plans for the proposed attack upon New York.

"Pressed on all sides by a choice of difficulties," writes he to the President, "I have adopted that line of conduct which suited the dignity and faith of Congress, the reputation of these States, and the honor of our arms. Neither the season nor a regard to decency would permit delay. The die is cast, and it remains with the States to fulfil either their engagements, preserve their credit and support their independence, or to involve us in disgrace and defeat. . . . I shall proceed on the supposition that they will ultimately consult their own interest and honor, and not suffer us to fail for want of means, which it is evidently in their power to afford. What has been done, and is doing, by some of the States, confirms the opinion I have entertained of the sufficient resources of the country. As to the disposition of the people to submit to any arrangements for bringing them forth, I see no reasonable grounds to doubt. If we fail for want of proper exertions, in any of the governments, I trust the responsibility will fall where it ought, and that I shall stand justified to Congress, to my country, and to the world."

The arrival, however, of the British Admiral

Graves, at New York, on the 13th of July, with six ships-of-the-line, gave the enemy such a superiority of naval force, that the design on New York was postponed until the second French division should make its appearance, or a squadron under the Count de Guichen, which was expected from the West Indies.

In the meantime Sir Henry Clinton, who had information of all the plans and movements of the allies, determined to forestall the meditated attack upon New York, by beating up the French quarters on Rhode Island. This he was to do in person at the head of six thousand men, aided by Admiral Arbuthnot with his fleet. Sir Henry accordingly proceeded with his troops to Throg's Neck on the sound, there to embark on board of transports which Arbuthnot was to provide. No sooner did Washington learn that so large a force had left New York, than he crossed the Hudson to Peekskill, and prepared to move towards King's Bridge, with the main body of his troops, which had recently been reinforced. His intention was, either to oblige Sir Henry to abandon his project against Rhode Island, or to strike a blow at New York during his absence. As Washington was on horseback, observing the crossing of the last division of his troops, General Arnold approached, having

just arrived in the camp. Arnold had been manœuvring of late to get the command of West Point, and, among other means, had induced Mr. Robert R. Livingston, then a New York member of Congress, to suggest it in a letter to Washington as a measure of great expediency. Arnold now accosted the latter to know whether any place had been assigned to him. He was told that he was to command the left wing, and Washington added, that they would have further conversation on the subject when he returned to headquarters. The silence and evident chagrin with which the reply was received surprised Washington, and he was still more surprised when he subsequently learned that Arnold was more desirous of a garrison post than of a command in the field, although a post of honor had been assigned him, and active service was anticipated. Arnold's excuse was that his wounded leg still unfitted him for action either on foot or horseback; but that at West Point he might render himself useful.

The expedition of Sir Henry was delayed by the tardy arrival of transports. In the meantime he heard of the sudden move of Washington, and learned, moreover, that the position of the French at Newport had been strengthened by the militia from the neighboring

country. These tidings disconcerted his plans. He left Admiral Arbuthnot to proceed with his squadron to Newport, blockade the French fleet, and endeavor to intercept the second division, supposed to be on its way, while he with his troops hastened back to New York.

In consequence of their return Washington again withdrew his forces to the west side of the Hudson; first establishing a post and throwing up small works at Dobbs Ferry, about ten miles above King's Bridge, to secure a communication across the river for the transportation of troops and ordnance, should the design upon New York be prosecuted.

Arnold now received the important command which he had so earnestly coveted. It included the fortress at West Point and the posts from Fishkill to King's Ferry, together with the corps of infantry and cavalry advanced towards the enemy's line on the east side of the river. He was ordered to have the works at the Point completed as expeditiously as possible, and to keep all his posts on their guard against surprise; there being constant apprehensions that the enemy might make a sudden effort to gain possession of the river.

Having made these arrangements, Washington recrossed to the west side of the Hudson, and took post at Orangetown or Tappan, on

the borders of the Jerseys, and opposite to Dobbs Ferry, to be at hand for any attempt upon New York.

The execution of this cherished design, however, was again postponed by intelligence that the second division of the French reinforcements was blockaded in the harbor of Brest by the British: Washington still had hopes that it might be carried into effect by the aid of the squadron of the Count de Guichen from the West Indies; or of a fleet from Cadiz.

At this critical juncture, an embarrassing derangement took place in the quartermaster-general's department, of which General Greene was the head. The reorganization of this department had long been in agitation. A system had been digested by Washington, Schuyler, and Greene, adapted, as they thought, to the actual situation of the country. Greene had offered, should it be adopted, to continue in the discharge of the duties of the department, without any extra emolument other than would cover the expenses of his family. Congress devised a different scheme. He considered it incapable of execution, and likely to be attended with calamitous and disgraceful results; he therefore tendered his resignation. Washington endeavored to prevent its being accepted. "Unless effectual measures are

taken," said he, "to induce General Greene and the other principal officers of that department to continue their services, there must of necessity be a total stagnation of military business. We not only must cease from the preparations for the campaign, but in all probability shall be obliged to disperse, if not disband the army, for want of subsistence."

The tone and manner, however, assumed by General Greene in offering his resignation, and the time chosen, when the campaign was opened, the enemy in the field, and the French commanders waiting for co-operation, were deeply offensive to Congress. His resignation was promptly accepted: there was a talk even of suspending him from his command in the line.

Washington interposed his sagacious and considerate counsels to allay this irritation, and prevent the infliction of such an indignity upon an officer for whom he entertained the highest esteem and friendship. "A procedure of this kind, without a proper trial," said he, "must touch the feelings of every officer. It will show in a conspicuous point of view the uncertain tenure by which they hold their commissions. In a word, it will exhibit such a specimen of power, that I question much if there is an officer in the whole line that will hold

a commission beyond the end of the campaign, if he does till then. Such an act in the most despotic government would be attended at least with loud complaints."

The counsels of Washington prevailed; the indignity was not inflicted, and Congress was saved from the error, if not disgrace, of discarding from her service one of the ablest and most meritorious of her generals.

Colonel Pickering was appointed to succeed Greene as quartermaster-general, but the latter continued for some time, at the request of Washington, to aid in conducting the business of the department. Colonel Pickering acquitted himself in his new office with zeal, talents, and integrity, but there were radical defects in the system which defied all ability and exertion.

The commissariat was equally in a state of derangement. "At this very juncture," writes Washington (August 20th), "I am reduced to the painful alternative, either of dismissing a part of the militia now assembling, or of letting them come forward to starve; which it will be extremely difficult for the troops already in the field to avoid. . . . Every day's experience proves more and more that the present mode of supplies is the most uncertain, expensive, and injurious that could be devised. It is impossible for us to form any calculations

of what we are to expect, and, consequently, to concert any plans for future execution. No adequate provision of forage having been made, we are now obliged to subsist the horses of the army by force, which, among other evils, often gives rise to civil disputes, and prosecutions, as vexatious as they are burdensome to the public." In his emergencies he was forced to empty the magazines at West Point; yet these afforded but temporary relief; scarcity continued to prevail to a distressing degree, and on the 6th of September, he complains that the army has for two or three days been entirely destitute of meat. "Such injury to the discipline of the army," adds he, "and such distress to the inhabitants, result from these frequent events, that my feelings are hurt beyond description at the cries of the one and at seeing the other."

The anxiety of Washington at this moment of embarrassment was heightened by the receipt of disastrous intelligence from the South; the purport of which we shall succinctly relate in another chapter.

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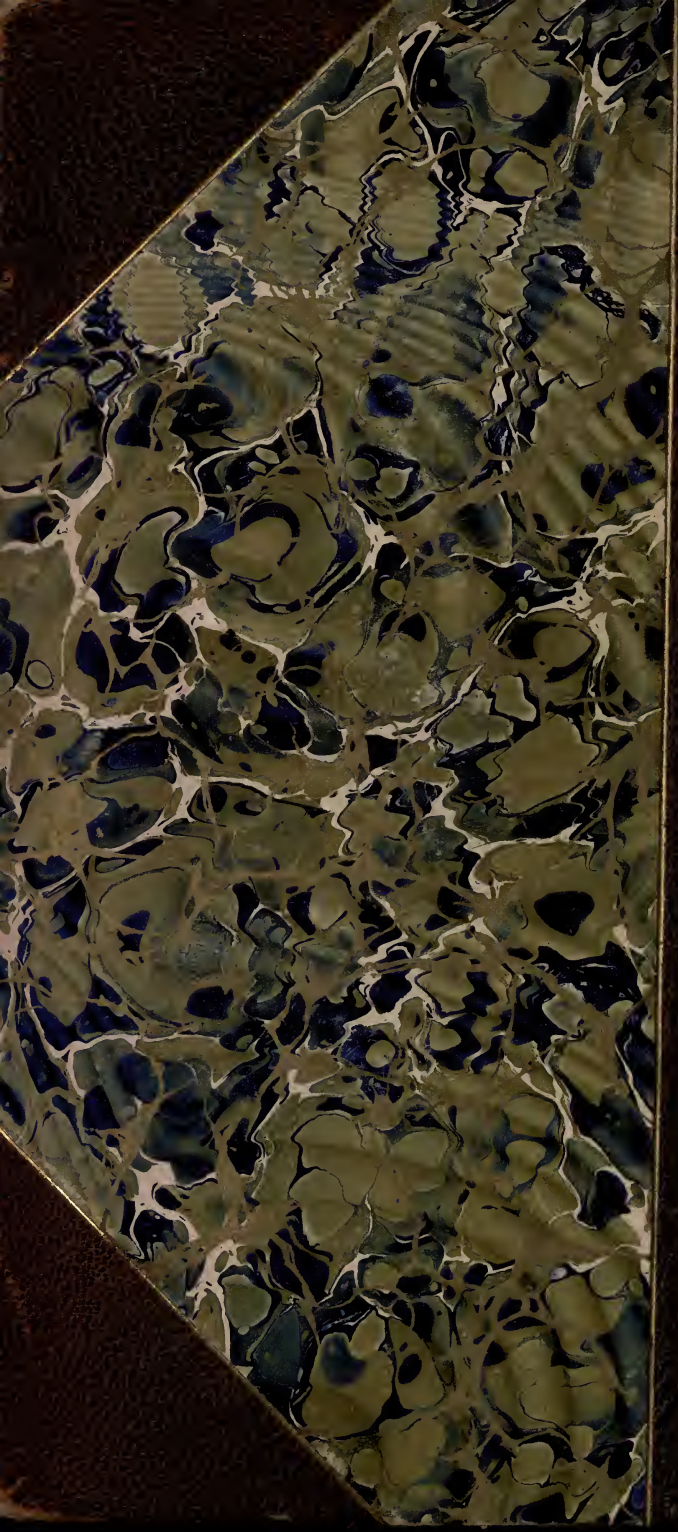
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